

HOUSES

*for Town or
Country*



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HOUSES FOR TOWN
OR COUNTRY



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A NEW-OLD DOORWAY

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HOUSES
for
TOWN *or* COUNTRY

BY

William Herbert

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK
Duffield & Company

1907 ,

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HOUSES FOR TOWN
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CHAPTER I

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY

THE United States has of late years passed through a period of significant activity in house-building. Beginning with 1899, Americans began to realise that their stock of buildings of all kinds was inadequate or superannuated. Increased volume of business, improved standards of living, higher æsthetic ideals all demanded more buildings, in some cases larger buildings, and buildings of a different type. Railroads found their stations cramped and ill-planned, their bridges too light to carry the heavier rolling stock they were using. Inn-keepers discovered that their patrons wanted larger and more sumptuous hotels, and at the same time they wished to take advantage themselves of recent improvements in the mechanics of hotel arrangement and outfit. The growth of cities and the increase in the wealth of their capitalists and banks encouraged as never before in so short a period the erection of huge office buildings; factories and warehouses of greater dimensions and superior equipment were demanded in even larger numbers; western and southern cities as well as New York found apartment houses paying speculative enterprises; and finally, all over the country rich and moderately well-to-do people were stimulated either to build new and larger dwellings, or to

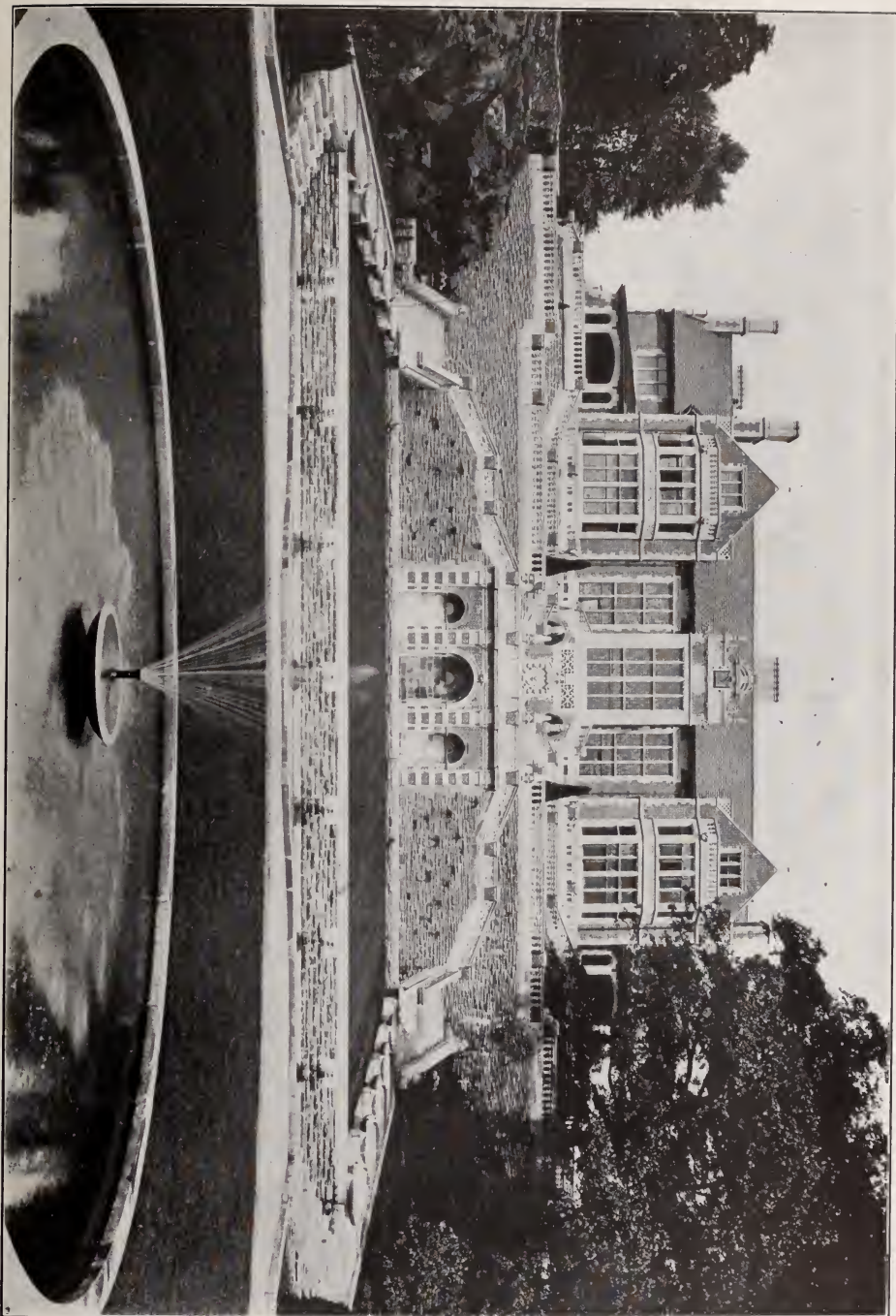
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remodel and redecorate, with the guidance of the best contemporary standards of design and embellishment, the dwellings which they already had. A complete set of new architectural mechanism and scenery was required; and it is not too much to say that in constructing it the American people accomplished in a few years an amount of building quite unprecedented in the history of the world.

What dominant tendencies are traceable in this miscellaneous mass of new construction? Which of these tendencies are new? Which significant? Which wholesome? What vitality have these wholesome tendencies?

The tendency best worth remarking is the increasing influence of a few general types of design. American architecture is still heterogeneous and indiscriminate enough; but not nearly so much so as it used to be. Certain solutions of special problems have been worked out, and largely adopted; and it is even more encouraging to note that these special ways of treatment and types of design, while open to many serious objections, have all some measure of propriety. Architecture in America, in other words, is becoming nationalised in very much the same way, if not to very much the same extent, as in modern England or France.

The more complete nationalising of American architecture in this limited sense may not seem to be a very important or desirable achievement; but from the point of view of the history of American architecture, it is both. There can be no doubt that the process in question is one of improvement, and



A TUDOR FRONT

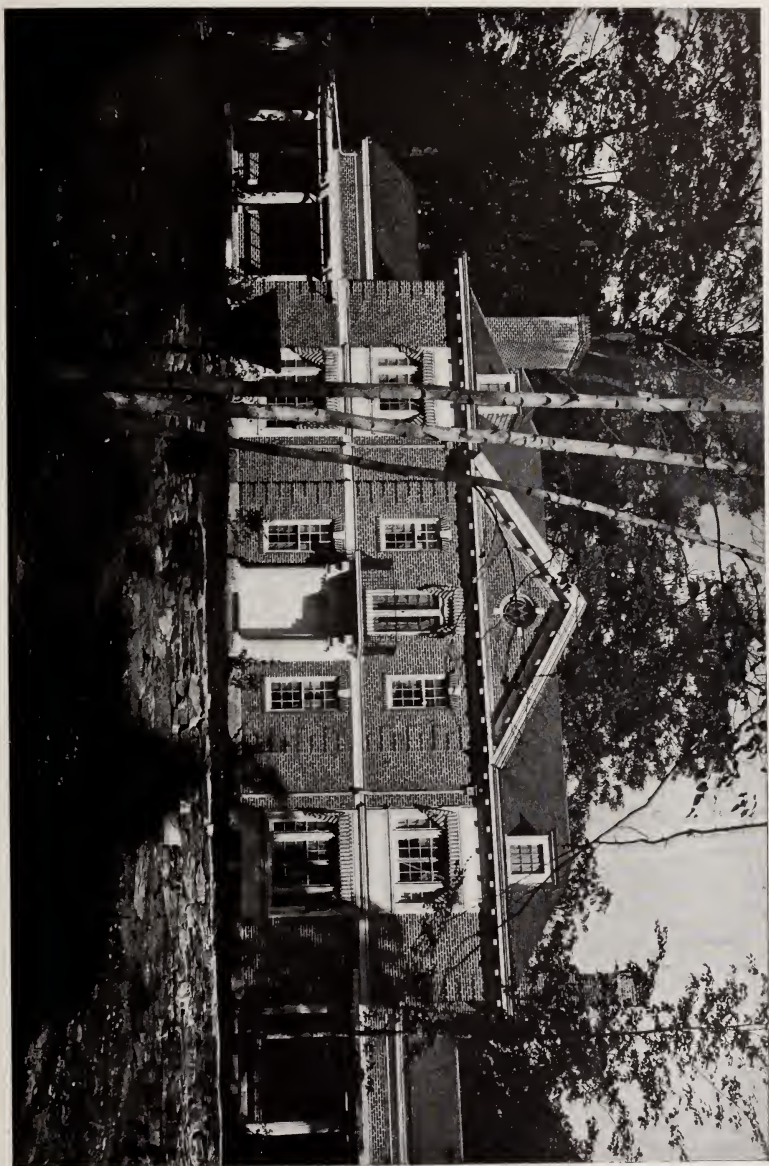
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promises, by giving some coherence and definiteness to a collection of designs formerly much more incoherent and dubious, to make the long and devious path of American architectural experimentation end in some genuine local architectural types.

It is a singular fact that American architectural practice was most uniform at the time when American social life was most completely divided by local and provincial traditions and customs. Notwithstanding differences arising from the contrast between the manner of life of a New England merchant and a Virginian planter, the larger Colonial building was surprisingly the same in all parts of the country, just as it was also surprisingly similar to its prototype in Georgian England. In the same way the architectural pseudo-classicism of the early days of the Republic, as soon as it was sufficiently introduced and properly familiarised, was used almost universally in buildings intended to possess any considerable architectural quality. In both these cases Americans were content to imitate a habit of design which originated abroad and was authorised by the respectable critical opinion of the day. They were frankly Colonial in their practice, untroubled by any aspirations after originality, diversity or picturesqueness.

As American life became more thoroughly nationalised, American architecture lost its early innocence of imitation, and consequently its early uniformity. It abandoned all touch with the respectable critical opinion of other countries; and it was quite without any definite critical opinions, respect-

"HARLAKDEN HALL," HOUSE OF WINSTON CHURCHILL, ESQ., CORNISH, N. H.



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able or otherwise, of its own. In fact it had no leading strings, except certain blind but significant



NEW YORK HOUSE FRONTS

instincts. The practice of imitation was deep-rooted; but it was the practice of imitating foreign models exclusively. There was never any thought

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY

of working over, or of really appropriating the forms already nationalised in this country. The period of American architecture meant merely the



RENAISSANCE FAÇADES

substitution of indiscriminate habits of imitation, for the selective imitation which had up to that time prevailed. The idea apparently was that the United States had inherited, architecturally, all the styles of

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the present and of the past, of the East and the West; and that the best way to use this heritage was to transplant to American soil as many samples as possible of these various types of building. So, during the twenty years preceding the war, American architecture showed how disinterested and impartial it was by becoming responsible for a surprising collection of Greek and Egyptian temple-residences, Italian villas, French châteaux, Oriental padogas and Gothic cottages. If there was any style of building which the American architect of that period missed, its omission was assuredly due to ignorance rather than to intention. Of course, this ignorant and riotous copying was to be found chiefly in the design of private dwellings. The official architecture of the whole of this period tended to be very conservative; and while New York did not avoid the anomaly of an "Egyptian" prison, Washington was spared the misfortune of any precisely analogous absurdity.

Without going into the details of our architectural history, it is sufficient for present purposes to say that design in this country has retained ever since to a greater or less extent this habit of indiscriminate imitation. Its occasional attempts at originality have been limited either to mere exaggerated distortions of conventional types, or to the incongruous mixture of several different types in one building. There has, however, been a constant improvement in the quality of the imitation, owing to the improvement in the training and equipment of the American architect, and a number of special archi-

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY

tectural movements have at different times had a great deal of influence. During the seventies, for instance, the attempted reform of the methods of interior decoration, which originated with Charles Eastlake, had considerable popularity. Next the powerful personality of Richardson printed the Romanesque Revival upon many of the most important buildings erected during the eighties. Since then the current has been running toward several different dilutions of the Italian or the French Renaissance styles. All of these architectural tendencies are embodied in a greater or smaller number of buildings; but the point is that the particular tendencies now prevailing are embodied in a greater number of buildings than ever before. The Eastlakian reform and the Romanesque revival affected different parts of the country very unevenly. The tendencies now at work are more evenly and generally effective; and if the larger of the new buildings could all be grouped together they would show both fewer architectural types and a wider geographical distribution of them.

Take, for instance, the designing of tall office-buildings. When steel construction began to have its effect upon the height and the looks of office-buildings, two tendencies were traceable in their design. In New York there was no attempt, as there should be in any kind of building, to make their appearance express their structure. A convention of treating them as columns with a decorated capital, a long plain central shaft, and a heavier base, was early adopted; and within the limits of this general

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A PHILADELPHIA HOUSE FRONT

idea, the regular architectural, structural and decorative forms were used regardless of their ordinary structural functions and associations. In Chicago,

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on the other hand, while many buildings were designed along the same lines as New York, there was a tendency towards a franker expression in the design of these buildings of the plain facts of their steel structure. Such is no longer the case. The new sky-scrapers, which have been, and are being, erected in large numbers in Chicago and Pittsburgh, as well as New York, almost all conform to the conventional treatment, long since adopted in the metropolis—and this in spite of comparatively good-looking attempts to solve the problem within the limitations imposed by the structure. Whether or not the American architect has, in this instance, chosen the wrong alternative, he has at any rate, for the time being, adopted a comparatively uniform type for the design of the “sky-scrapers.”

Very much the same inference can be drawn from the manner in which the later hotels have been designed. Until recently the larger hotels of the United States did not in their appearance embody the remotest approach to a convention. Except in one or two instances they were ugly and incongruous hodge-podges of worthless architectural motives. Apparently nobody cared very much how a hotel looked or what atmosphere it exhaled. The early big American inns, such as the Astor and Palmer houses, were morose and heavy but grandiose buildings, embodying, one might infer, the idea that hotels were a kind of public penal institution, from which guests must be denied escape. Even the Auditorium in Chicago belongs in this respect to the earlier type of American hotels. Although

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architecturally of the highest interest, its façade possesses none the less a grim and forbidding aspect, which is out of keeping with the uses to which the building is put. It was the Waldorf-Astoria which changed all this and started hotel façades off on new lines. By reason of its magnitude, its conspicuousness, its success, and even, with all its faults, of a certain propriety in the design, its architect has really established a fashion in hotel fronts. Since its erection both architects and proprietors of these buildings have come to realise that one means of attracting the custom of rich and "smart" people is to put up a "smart" appearance on the outside as well as on the inside of their hotels; and ever since some such attempt has been made. The big new hotels, both in New York and the other leading cities, are revised versions of the Waldorf-Astoria or the Manhattan or both. Specifically French characteristics have in most cases been intensified; but the parentage is unmistakable, and is traceable in the Hotel St. Regis, the Hotel Astor, the Knickerbocker, in the larger apartment hotels of New York, in the New Stratford in Philadelphia, the New Willard in Washington, the Belvidere in Baltimore, and even the Lafayette in Buffalo. While one may or may not like this sort of thing, one must admit that it has an appropriately festive appearance, and that it affords an excellent illustration of the increased prevalence of certain specific types in American architecture.

The two foregoing instances suggest that perhaps the secret of this increased prevalence of specific



AN ELIZABETHAN COUNTRY HOUSE

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types is the growing assumption by New York of an actual metropolitan function in the social economy of the country. From this point of view American architecture would be obtaining certain definite general characteristics, because the smaller cities were looking to New York for leadership in matters of taste. There is undoubtedly some truth in this interpretation of the facts. New York is more the leader in matters of taste than it ever has been before. It does a great deal, and is constantly doing more to fix the standards, such as they are, of the rest of the country. But the extent to which other cities look to New York for their architectural conventions has some obvious and significant limitations. New York in its relation to the rest of the country has two distinguishing characteristics: It is the city, on the one hand, of the rich man, the national corporations, and the big buildings. On the other hand it is the port of entry of the latest foreign artistic injection. It so happens at the present time that these two different characteristics of New York have a very unequal effect upon the rest of the country. In all showy and costly structures, such as office buildings, hotels, and "palatial residences," the general standards and conventions are for the most part derived from New York; and this current of imitation of some part of the latest foreign architectural injection, gives an impetus to a kind of Beaux-Arts movement over the South and the West. For the most part, however, the Beaux-Arts influence is confined to New York. It has had practically no effect upon any but the biggest residences and apartment

"APPLEGARTH," RESIDENCE OF C. W. WETMORE, ESQ., OYSTER BAY, L. I.



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A TYPE OF INEXPENSIVE DWELLING

houses. The smaller dwellings in the other cities owe little to New York, while in the western cities an interesting and in some respects excellent local type of apartment house is being developed.

The comparative lack of influence of New York over the design of middle-class residences and apartment houses is partly due to the peculiarly local conditions which determine such designs in the metropolis. New York is cramped for space and will remain so until subways, bridges and tunnels abolish the impediments to free communication resulting from its insular situation. Western cities, on

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY

the other hand, can expand in almost any direction with the utmost freedom, and a comparatively poor resident of one of them can afford to buy as much land in an eligible location as a very rich man may in New York. In consequence the detached residence still prevails in the West and even in certain parts of the East, whereas the block residence, whether private or multiple, prevails and will continue to prevail in New York. New York has, of course, its suburbs; but its suburban residences, except in a few choice locations, belong to an inferior type. Its typical dwelling is that erected on a lot measuring from twenty-five to fifty by one hundred, and covering as large a portion of that lot as the law allows; and the successful solution of the architectural problem offered by such a façade contains little that is useful to the designer of the detached residence of the West.

The influence of New York consequently on residential design does not cover either a very considerable area or very many instances. Some large seven and eight-story apartment houses have recently been erected in Washington; and these buildings, deplorably out of keeping with the general atmosphere and appearance of the city, might very well have been situated in those parts of the West Side of New York most dominated by the speculative builder of flats. Outside of Washington, however, apartment houses of this type are a rare and insignificant excrescence. In the same way the millionaires' residences of the West are frequently nothing more than vulgarised imitations of some of the "stunning"

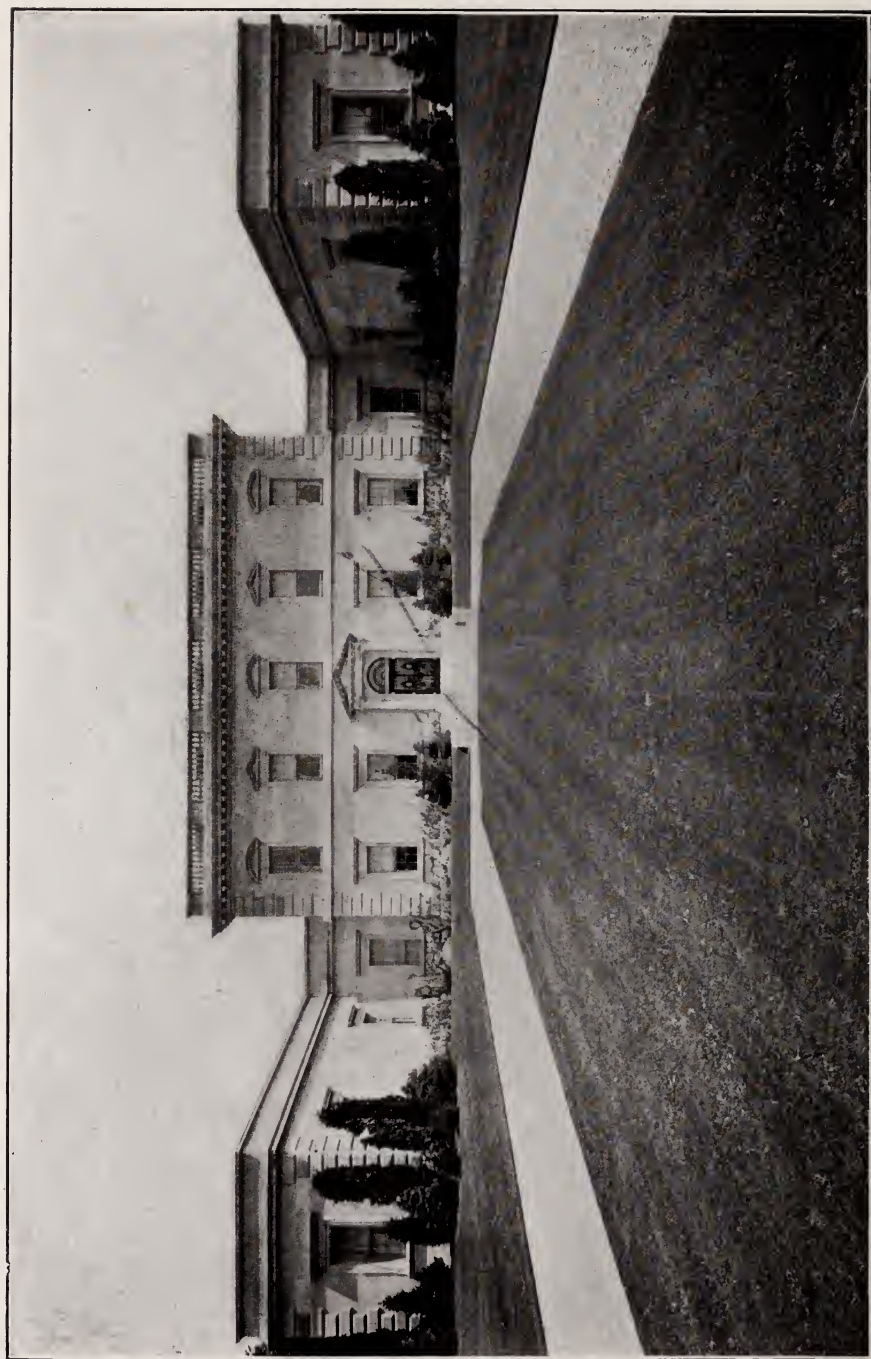
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dwelling designed by New York architects for rich New York clients, which instead of being "stunning" are more often stupefying. The resemblance, such as it is, is much more a matter of the interior than of the exterior. Their detachment so completely alters the conditions under which they are designed that there is a corresponding alteration in their appearance.

The suburban apartment house of the West is a type of residence almost unknown either in New York or its vicinity. The New York apartment house has none of the characteristics of good domestic architecture. At its best it tends to become a copy of the corresponding French type, and obtains some of the same effect of festive publicity; but the speculative builder very seldom allows it to appear at its best. It is a kind of residence which no man of taste would choose unless he were obliged to do so. The better suburban apartment house of the West, on the contrary, is obliged to make itself attractive. People of moderately respectable means are not forced to live in a flat. If they choose to do so, it is not because they could not afford a house; it is merely because they find a flat for some reason more suitable to their particular needs. Flats and dwellings, that is, are more nearly on the same economic level, and compete freely with each other; and as an incident to this competition, the builders of low-priced flats try harder to retain some of the advantages of private residences without surrendering the advantages of all multiple residences. Consequently the suburban apartment house of the



A GOOD EXAMPLE OF CITY ARCHITECTURE



A HOUSE AT NEWPORT

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY

West is frequently built free from neighbouring buildings, is surrounded by open spaces made attractive with shrubbery and flowers; is generally designed in a distantly Georgian and Jacobean manner, and so presents the appearance of a domestic building; and each apartment is often supplied with a pleasant roomy piazza for the exclusive use of its occupants. It is also easier under such conditions to plan the flats so that the rooms are larger, better lighted, and more effectively distributed. It is evident that residential buildings of this type will become still more important in the future, and are destined to be more numerous than they now are in the New York suburbs.

In the design of private dwellings, New York has no more general influence upon the South and West than it does in the design of apartment houses. In this respect the West is adopting a tradition which has been better preserved in Boston and Philadelphia than in New York, the tradition of the good brick styles. The advantage which it derives from possessing an abundance of comparatively cheap and accessible land cannot be overestimated. The private dwelling which forms a part of the block and tends to become taller and deeper constitutes a mutilated and discouraging architectural problem; and it is particularly discouraging in cities, such as those of England and the United States, wherein architectural ignorance and caprice have not been regulated by convention or law. We believe that the better contemporary New York dwelling is a great improvement upon the corresponding grade of



HOUSE OF MR. JAMES W. PAUL, JR., RADNOR, PA.



HOUSE OF THOMAS NELSON PAGE, ESQ., WASHINGTON, D. C.

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London dwellings, as well as upon the better New York dwelling of ten years or more ago; but it has little interest from the present point of view, because it has not as yet succeeded in reaching the respectable routine that would be its best merit, which is the line of development we are now seeking to trace in American design.

The West, however, is emancipated from these disadvantageous conditions. Its new urban dwellings, costing from \$40,000 to \$200,000, are designed under very favorable circumstances. The avenues and boulevards upon which its handsome houses are situated are broad and well-shaded and admirably adapted to the use of automobiles—a conveyance which will be extremely effective in confirming the use of this type of dwelling. Each house is a unit, and is generally surrounded by sufficient land to enable the architect to enhance his design by appropriate landscape arrangements. It is possible under such conditions to give a personal and domestic atmosphere to the individual house; which is just what is happening in the West—particularly in the large Middle Western cities.

The design of these buildings is beginning to show certain definite characteristics. The use of brick is very general except in a few of the most expensive houses, and in many cases even these expensive houses are no exception to this rule. Wherever brick is used, it is generally well used. The historic domestic styles appropriate to brick construction are, of course, the Georgian and Jacobean, so that when it is asserted that the great majority of these



AMERICAN COUNTRY HOUSES



PORTICO OF "APPLECARRTH"

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY



RESIDENCE ON FERRY STREET, BUFFALO

houses are modifications either of the Georgian or Jacobean types of dwelling, they have been placed in an excellent stylistic tradition. Of the two the Georgian predominates, both because of its American associations, and because it is better adapted to the comparatively modest dimensions of the great majority of these houses. The Georgian is also treated with better effect because its forms are less difficult to handle than those of a transitional style like the Jacobean. The only other historical domestic form found in a sufficient number of examples to demand notice, is the Elizabethan timbered gabled

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dwelling. This type is very popular, perhaps more popular than the Jacobean, because it also is adapted to houses of comparatively small cost; and the architects who use it show much more skill than formerly in avoiding the mere looseness of design for which these irregular styles offer opportunity.

The examples given above sufficiently illustrate the truth of my preliminary statement that American architects are adopting more than ever certain stereotyped kinds of design. I have traced the presence of these types in office buildings, in the larger hotels, in apartment houses and private dwellings. Examples might include the best kind of factory buildings and warehouses, and a large number of one-story bank buildings. It is unnecessary, however, to describe in any further detail the existence of this tendency towards increased definition, and it only remains to pass a proper judgment upon its significance and value.

There can be no doubt that the increasing authority of certain special types of design constitutes the line of progress for American architecture. The architect more than any other artist is dependent upon precedent. The material of his work is not derived from nature or life, but from the work of his predecessors. His individual genius counts for less than in the other arts; the general social and the particular technical standards count for more. This was particularly true in the great periods of Greek and Gothic architecture, whose noblest monuments were almost literally the work of communities and certain particular, although flexible, forms were

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY

absolutely imposed upon the architects. With the Renaissance began a period of more conscious imitation of forms that had already been developed to the highest degree of perfection. It gave the individual architect a greater freedom of choice than he had ever had before, and increased correspondingly his opportunity for merely individual work. But it did not emancipate him from precedent; it only gave him a larger number of precedents from which to choose. Undoubtedly this very freedom of choice, which only reached its height during the last one hundred years, is the chief cause of the degeneracy of architecture during the nineteenth century. It has been most meritorious in those cases in which certain conventions have been established, as in France. It has been less so when the architect owed no allegiance to any authoritative forms. The architect can never regain the comparative unconsciousness and single-mindedness of his Greek and Gothic predecessors; but with the help of a sound national culture, he can impose upon himself conventions that will reduce the area of arbitrary choice and enable him to devote himself more to the adaptation and improvement than to the selection of types of design.

This is just what the American architect is now doing. He is imposing certain types of design upon himself, and is concerned more in appropriating these types and in developing them to a satisfactory finish than in borrowing or trying to invent new types. In using the phrase "the American architect" in the description above, I do not mean all Ameri-

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AN OLDER TYPE

can architects. I do not mean even all the good American architects, but only the better and younger Americans whose work is becoming more conspicuous every day, and to whom belongs the immediate future of American design. The older architects, whose work during the past twenty-five years has been so valuable and who have done so much to raise the technical standards of the profession, were essentially eclectic, and experimented freely with many different types. Their achievements were of

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY



A DIFFERENCE OF LEVELS

the utmost value in making the transition from an ignorant and indiscriminate to an intelligent eclecticism. They served to educate the clients for whom they built, the mechanics who carried the designs out, and the pupils who continued the professional tradition. Most of all they have succeeded in educating themselves, for their work has shown a constantly growing tendency toward the adoption of certain specific types. It is not to be supposed that the eclecticism of the past will disappear during the period of American design now beginning. The process of education is incomplete. The formative

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

influences are still weak and uncertain; a vast accumulation of bad habits, indifference, low and easy-going standards remain to be reduced. Yet undoubtedly the younger men are conscious of the need of giving consistency and effect to their work by the persistent use of certain particular architectural types, and by the persistent attempt to give to those types a value that is both newer and more complete.

I have described the growing popularity of special types of design for special kinds of buildings as the increasing "nationalisation" of American architecture, but probably that was going too far. The phrase is intended to express a desirable issue faintly promised rather than particularly achieved. Before we can speak of the "nationalisation" of American architecture we must not merely be able to trace the constant use of certain special types of design, but show that without losing their traditional dignity those types are being given an appropriate local expression—that they are living types constantly gathering a complete consistency, a better adaptation to the structure and the service of the building and a finer æsthetic propriety. In this sense of the word "national" American architecture can only to a limited extent be described as in the way of nationalisation. The long and difficult task of adapting the traditional styles to the peculiarities of American structural methods and utilitarian requirements is being more frequently ignored and evaded than resolutely faced.

The structure of our buildings and their design are so far almost completely at cross-purposes; and

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY

any one who defines good architecture in terms of congruity will find few signs of improvement in recent buildings. But while we may not look for any advance in this very important respect, our architects are nevertheless succeeding in giving their buildings an ever-increasing propriety and consistency of appearance. When they design a hotel they use a style that harmonises with the way we feel when we are living for a few days away from home, freed from routine and responsibilities. When they design a private dwelling they seek to give the building a style that is homely, domestic and refined. Furthermore these styles are carefully studied and are treated generally with an eye to strictly architectural effects. The persistent attempt is to get a building in which the mass, the proportion, and the detail each has its proper value, and this is a considerable gain over the past when architects sought merely picturesque effects by almost ignoring proportions, and conceived their building as a collection of detail on a large scale.

In another respect, also, American architecture, particularly in the case of dwellings, may be said to have grown more idiomatic. If structure and design remain very much at cross purposes, plan and design are becoming friendlier. The plan of the modern American dwelling differs in some important respects from that of any historical type of residence. These variations frequently lead to interesting modifications in the designs, and consequently to desirable departures from mere stylistic purity. The piazza, for instance, which is so necessary in the

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



AN AMERICAN PIAZZA

American summer climate and which has been an architectural excrescence on the majority of country houses, is now frequently treated as an outdoor room, in strict subordination to the main design. Sometimes it appears as a narrow gallery on the face of the house, more often a place is found for it at one or both ends, its lines being used either to continue those of the house or to vary them in an interesting way. This is only one illustration out of many which might be used, but it is typical of the more conscientious manner in which the architect attempts to render in appropriate architectural terms the novel and local conditions given in the plans of his buildings.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TO-DAY

It should be added that the adoption of certain definite and appropriate types of design by the better American architects should help not only to raise the standard of American architecture, but increase its popularity. In the past our architects have apparently sought to make their work impressive chiefly by making it striking; but if the impression is to be widespread as well as deep, it is rather the familiar than the "stunning" thing that counts. The "people" are merely confused by an art and architecture to which they are unaccustomed. They may be "stunned" for the moment, but next moment they forget all about it. On the other hand they are pleased and convinced by a kind of art that finds its way to their apprehension by means of their memories. In the representative arts, the subject-matter represented must appeal to their common experience. In the more formal and decorative arts form must have the confirmation of association. The difficulty with modern American architecture is that it started with nothing but vicious associations, and the good architects have been confronted by the enormously difficult task of substituting the comparatively good for the comparatively bad associations of the past. In so doing they have depended too much on obtaining an interesting variety of effect, and too little upon the value of repetition as an advertisement. Architectural repetition is in bad odor in this country, because in the past it has been applied chiefly to such dead and dreary material as brownstone fronts. Nevertheless the one sensible course for the future—the one course which will

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provide both for a better quality of design and for a completer understanding between architect and client—is to make out of repetition a conviction and ideal. If the opportunities for repetition are studied with sufficient care the necessary variety and novelty of effect will take care of themselves.

CHAPTER II

THE TYPICAL TOWN HOUSE

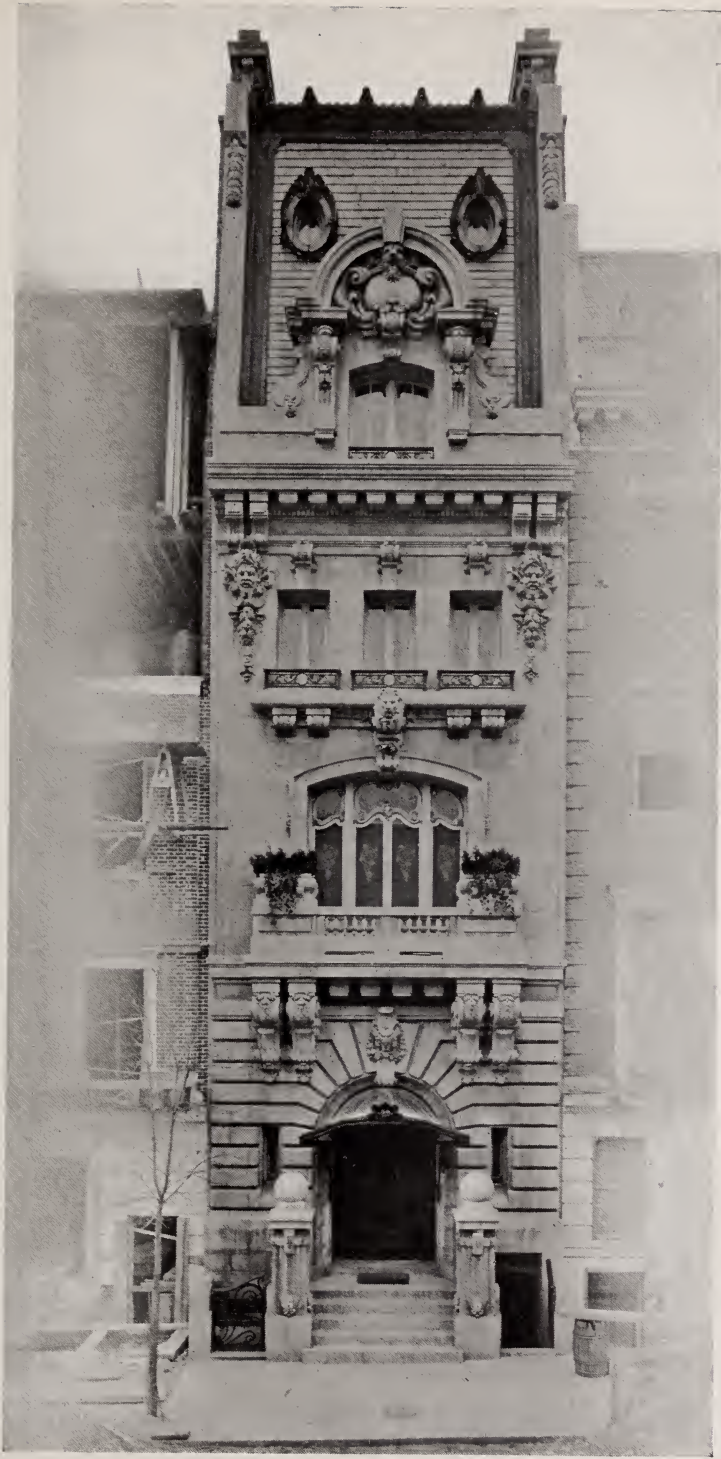
THE typical town house may be defined as the sort of house one is compelled to build on a narrow city lot unlighted on either side; for though in many American cities there is vastly more room than in New York or Boston or Philadelphia, the metropolitan type has a tendency to stamp itself on smaller towns with all its inconveniences. By a process of evolution all houses of this sort are built nowadays on the so-called American or English basement plan, the stairs midway between front and rear, an "extension" in the back for butler's pantry on the dining-room floor and bathrooms above, and all living rooms taking up the entire width of the lot. It is interesting to note the variations achieved within these limits.

The architect of even handsome and costly dwellings in a city like New York is confronted by these extremely difficult problems. Land in the best residential districts is so expensive that a man willing to pay, say, \$100,000 for house and lot is frequently obliged to put up with very inadequate space. In any other city in the world, a sum as large as that would secure a desirable site of ample dimensions and leave at least \$70,000 to be spent upon the house, but in New York, a man who wishes to live in a

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

choice location and does not wish to pay extravagantly for it, must be satisfied with a lot measuring not more than twenty-five by one hundred, and frequently not even as much as that. The architect consequently is obliged to plan a house on a site which is very narrow and very deep; and he must at the same time so dispose his space as to afford his client every convenience and a spacious as well as a handsome architectural appearance.

It was this familiar problem which confronted the architect in designing the house illustrated on page 41. The lot, situated in a very desirable location, measures twenty feet on the street by one hundred feet deep, and on this narrow area, five times as long in one direction as it is in the other, the architect had to plan a house which was to be both good-looking and comfortable. Of course, the necessary room for comfort must be obtained by occupying as much space as possible in every available direction. The house could not be more than twenty feet wide, but it had to be as much as that. It could not be more than one hundred feet deep; but with the extension it runs back ninety-three feet, which makes the back yard nothing more than a court. It could not be more than five stories high, because the owner did not want an elevator, but the five stories project higher than any other five-storied house in the vicinity. Finally this particular house not only has a basement, but a sub-basement as well, which is unusual in a dwelling of this size. Thus by obtaining as much space as possible in every direction, and by the ingenious management of the space



FACADE FOR A TOWN LOT

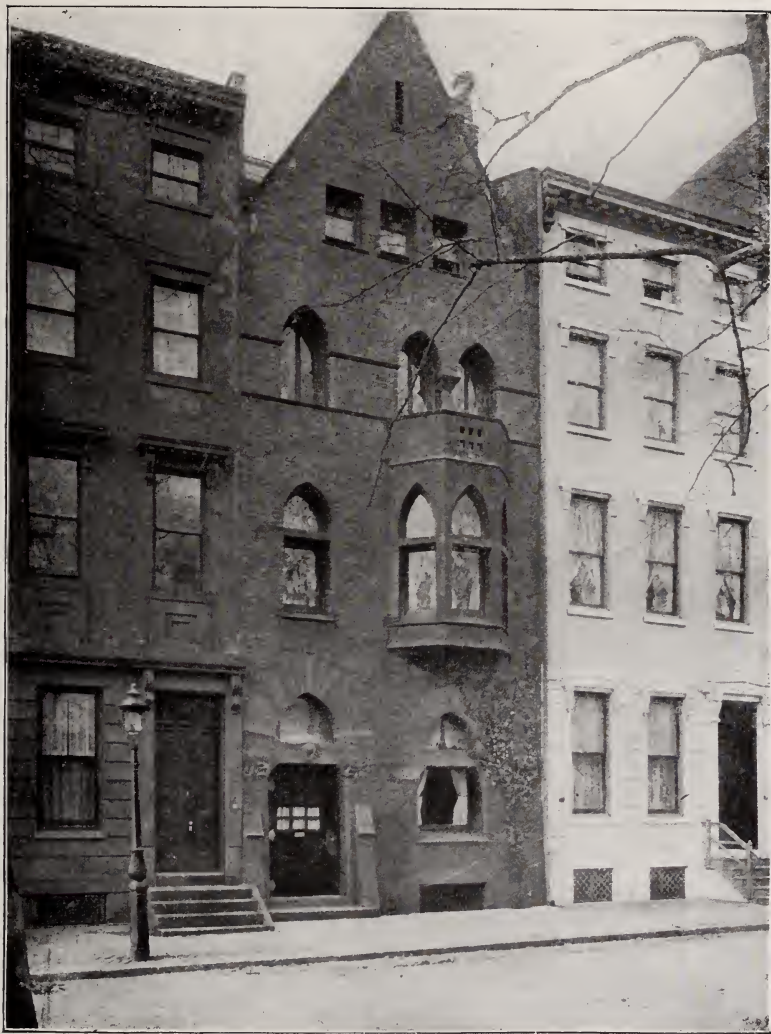
HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

so obtained, the architect has succeeded in designing a residence conveniently planned, fully equipped, comparatively well-lighted, and spacious in interior effect.

In designing the façade he departed in several important respects from customary arrangements. In spite of the fact that his lot was only twenty feet wide, he was not afraid to make his front almost ten feet higher than the fronts of the neighbouring buildings. The proportion, consequently, between the width and the height of his façade was the same as that between a building which is forty feet wide and eleven stories high. The building was by way of being a tower, yet it could not be treated as such and keep its proper domestic effect. The architect was obliged to adopt a scheme which would serve to make the height of the building less rather than more conspicuous; and this obligation carried with it the necessity of strong horizontal projections dividing the façade into three members. The usual result of such a division is that the lowest member, consisting of the ground floor, is insignificant in architectural effect compared with the upper members, each of which consists of two stories. But in this house this difficulty has been avoided by making the ground floor much higher than is customary, as may be seen by comparing it with the ground floors of the neighbouring buildings. A large part of the extra height is thrown into this division of the façade, which occupies a place in the composition corresponding to its functional importance.

In other respects, also, the architect has managed

THE TYPICAL TOWN HOUSE



AN AMERICAN STREET

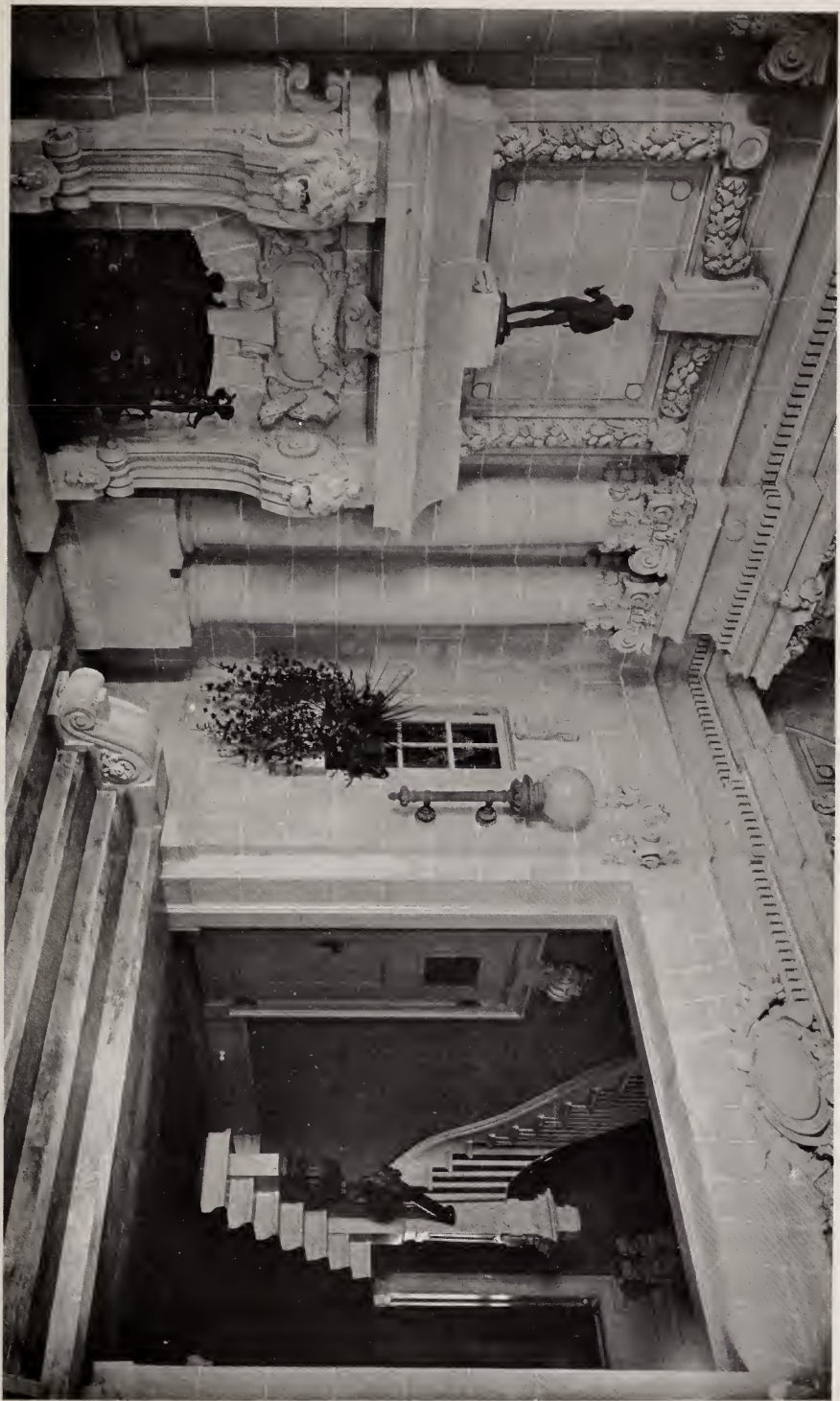
his design very cleverly. The three members of the façade are distinguished by marked and significant differences of treatment. On the ground floor the

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rustication of the stone work, the strong arch of the doorway, the stoop with solid posts on either side, and the *marquise*—all combine to give the story an individual character appropriate to its special function. In the next division, including the second and third stories, the treatment looks towards a certain grace of effect, which is obtained by the flat masonry, the balconies and windows suggesting handsome interiors, and the motives of the ornament. The upper stories are, of course, treated as a roof with a dormer in the centre and with a bull's-eye above on each side. Different, however, as are these three members, they are tied together by the stone frame of the sloping roof, and by the downward droop of the prominent decorative details. The only instance in which the detail has been used in a very questionable manner is that of the consoles carrying the lower balcony, which give too much the appearance of being externally applied to the heavily rusticated masonry behind. The whole scheme, however, is extremely compact, considering the ornate character of its design, and is at the same time full of significant detail. The architect is to be congratulated on his careful and skilful disposition of an intractable group of architectural elements.

The unusual height of the first story has made it possible to obtain an entrance hallway of extraordinary dimensions. It is hard to believe as one enters this hall that it is in a house only twenty feet wide. This hallway is finished in Caen stone, and is elaborately ornamented—perhaps rather too much so; but it makes a handsome approach to the house. On

HALL IN HOUSE OF M. NEWBORG, ESQ., NEW YORK



HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

leaving the entrance hall the visitor mounts four steps to a higher level, which in turn leads to a stairway, and the first landing of this stairway gives directly on a room of some importance. This room is the dining-room, the situation of which in this particular place is the peculiar feature and virtue of the plan of the house. It is the height of the first story that has enabled the architect to raise the level of the dining-room above the level of the entrance hall, and by this means to give it both a good architectural approach and convenient arrangements below. Beneath the hall there is nothing except the boiler-room, but beneath the dining-room are two rooms, one below the other. The first of these rooms is the kitchen, and the second the laundry. In this way the architect has given the housekeeper a spacious kitchen and a spacious laundry both on a twenty-foot lot, while between the kitchen and the boiler-room he has found an opportunity for a servants' dining and sitting-room. Both the kitchen and the laundry are equipped with the best machinery in the way of ranges, refrigerators, clothes-dryers, and the like; and the whole arrangement is an excellent example of ingenious and economical house-planning.

In other respects also the plan is well considered. The house measures seventy-four feet from front to rear, omitting the extension. This area is occupied by spacious rooms back and front, and in the middle by some debatable space, which varies in amount and use on each floor. On the first floor the doubtful area is comparatively small, because the drawing-room



UPPER HALL IN HOUSE OF M. NEWBORG, ESQ., NEW YORK

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in front is thirty-five feet deep, and the library in the rear is twenty-eight feet deep. The hall takes up most of the remaining area, but space is found for the servants' stairway on one side and a small retiring room on the other. The hall is lighted and aired by a court, measuring four by seventeen feet, which is unusually large for a house of this size in New York. On the floor above, which contains a large bedroom back and front, it is natural that space should be taken from the bigger apartments and devoted to humbler but no less essential purposes. Thus there are two bathrooms, a shower, five or six closets, and the servants' stairway, all tucked into the space between the two rooms, while the extension on this floor naturally becomes a boudoir. On the floor above, the area is, of course, still more subdivided. In the rear there is a nursery and in the front a bedroom, the intermediate space containing, besides the usual appurtenances, a large linen-room. The architect has even managed to provide an outdoor playground, for inasmuch as the extension does not run through this story, its roof can be used as a sort of elevated yard. On the top floor there are not only four servants' bedrooms, but sewing and storerooms besides. Throughout the whole house every inch of space is used, and the housekeeper has not been obliged to forego any facility or comfort because of the narrow limits of the site.

One peculiarity of the plan, which makes for admirable interior effect, is the octagonal shape of the rear rooms. The corners of the body of the house have been cut off both for the sake of the light



DINING-ROOM IN HOUSE OF M. NEWBORG, ESQ., NEW YORK

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BEDROOM WITH PLATFORM

and because of the more interesting shape which certain important apartments would obtain thereby. Both the dining-room and the library are octagonal in shape, and this fact has had an important effect upon the design of these rooms. For all the interiors of the house are as thoroughly designed as the exterior. That is the difference between this house and the majority of modern New York houses of the same class. As a usual thing the rooms of these houses are only decorated. In the present instance they have been, as we have said, really designed. More

THE TYPICAL TOWN HOUSE



BEDROOM WITH OCTAGONAL END

or less appropriate historic styles have not been adapted to the several different apartments; but the purpose has been to make each room look as if it served its purpose, and at the same time look well.

In carrying out this idea, the mantelpieces, the panelling, the ceiling, the rugs and the furniture are all of the architect's own selection or planning; and in his dispositions he has sought for simplicity as well as propriety. It is all very vigorous work with plenty of depth to the treatment of the surface detail,

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and the result borrows nothing from upholstery or hangings of any kind.

Such is the way in which the interior of houses should be handled, and in this particular instance the architect was as fortunate in his client as the client in the architect.

Another dwelling illustrated herewith is similarly typical of the narrow-lot house, and yet shows the divergence possible from difference of feeling in design and style. It is arranged, as usual, with the entrance on the ground floor, with the dining-room in the rear of the ground floor, and with the front and back rooms of the second floor occupied respectively by the living and drawing-rooms. The house is only a little over twenty feet wide; but, owing to the economical distribution of the space, the important rooms are all large and well-proportioned apartments. It is a remodelled building, with a singularly successful combination of simplicity of form with vivacity of effect.

The house is entered on the street level through a hall which is particularly worth attention, because it deserves to be taken as a model treatment of an entrance hallway to a house of this size and plan. An entrance hall is, of course, fundamentally a passageway between the street and the living rooms of a house; but in many New York dwellings it serves the additional purpose of providing a place in which guests remove their coats and wraps. In the present case an alcove, occupying the space not required by the outer vestibule, offers a sheltered corner in which ladies may lay aside their cloaks, and thus

THE TYPICAL TOWN HOUSE



HALL IN MR. NORMAN HAPGOOD'S HOUSE, NEW YORK

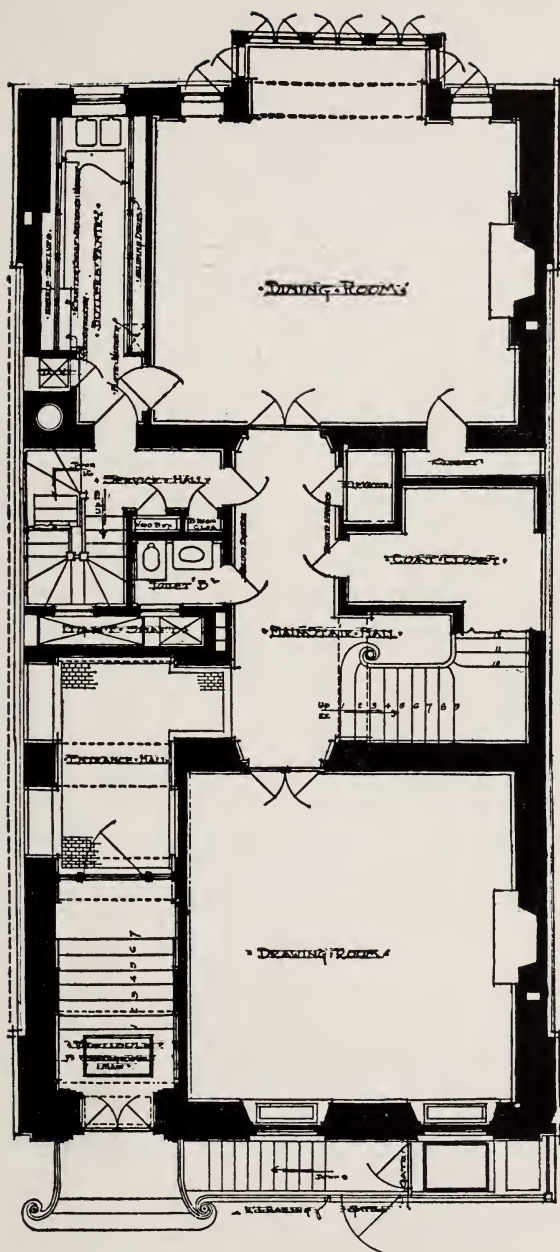
it serves excellently its secondary purpose. But it serves its primary purpose still better. A successful room is at bottom an embodiment of good manners; and this hallway introduces a visitor to the house in a manner that is at once discreet, sincere and cordial. The room is treated with the utmost sobriety and with a complete lack of decorative superfluities and affectations; but it is as far as possible from being chilly and dull. In spite of its

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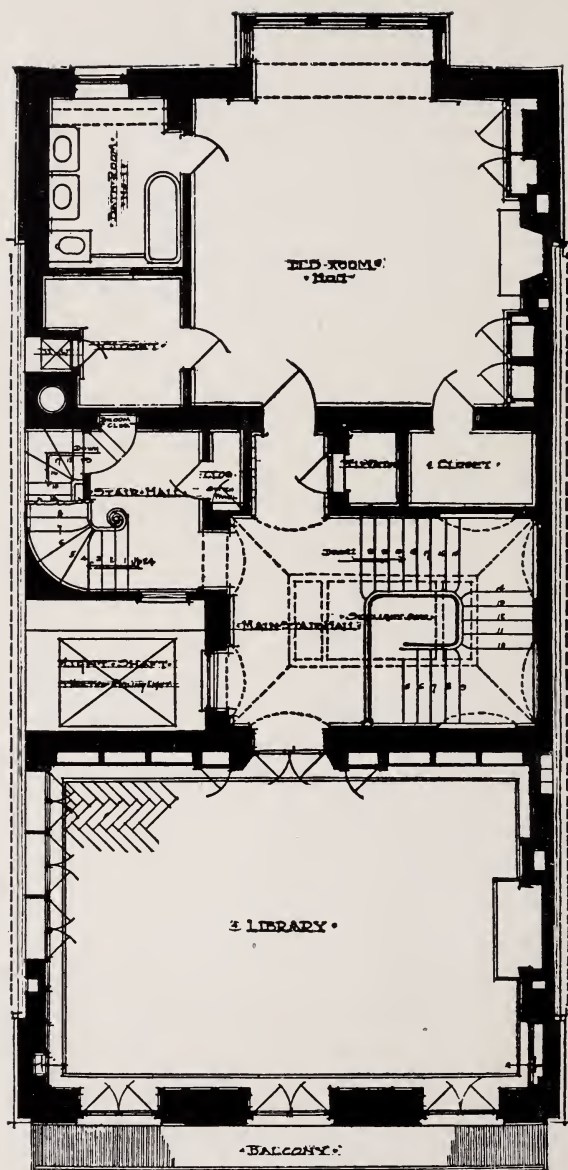
marble floor and stone walls, it is a gracious, almost a habitable room, in which one likes to linger; and this pleasant propriety of aspect may be traced as much to the poise with which the room carries itself, as to the agreeable anticipations it affords that a further acquaintance with the house will be equally pleasant.

The room has the air of receiving its visitors graciously because its colour tone is warm and positive. The artificial Caen stone with which the walls are finished has been subdued to a slightly deeper yellow than is usually the case, and its tint harmonises admirably with the warm grey of the Italian mantelpiece. The plaster above the stone shows somewhat too white; but this is a blemish which the New York atmosphere will quickly cure. On the other hand, the reserve which is mixed with this graciousness of demeanour comes chiefly from the avoidance of ornamental irrelevances. There is indeed very little detail of any kind. The east and west walls are relieved by two large flat panels. The Caen stone is appropriately capped by a moulding, which on the piers becomes capitalised, and a simple plaster moulding marks the curve of the wall into the ceiling. The room can stand this absence of ornament because it depends for effect upon the primary sources thereof—upon its interesting plan, its correct proportions, and its fitness to its purpose. What we have called the sincerity of its demeanour is the outcome of this æsthetic integrity.

If the reader would like to appreciate how much of an achievement this is, let him compare the pho-



PLAN FOR A NARROW LOT



BEDROOM FLOOR FOR A NARROW LOT

THE TYPICAL TOWN HOUSE

tographs of this hall with those of similar rooms in houses of similar size and plan. While the other rooms all have their points of interest and excellence, their deportment is in each case injured by some intentional or unintentional impropriety. It would be invidious to name the owners of these other rooms; but it can do no harm to catalogue a few of the ways in which the designers of entrance hallways impair the æsthetic integrity of such apartments. In one case the hall of a house rather smaller in size has been made charming with a number of amusing decorative episodes; but these incidents are so prominent that the total impression is that of a room which is rather affectedly pretty. In another the scale of the hall was such as to constitute an introduction to a large and "palatial" house rather than one erected on a twenty-foot lot. In another instance the walls of a very carefully designed hall were disfigured with an eruption of bloated ornament positively distressing to anybody whose eye has not been perverted by false training. In a fourth instance, a very reserved and gentlemanly room, finished in the same greyish tone as that of the house in question, was marred by the red brick with which the chimney was lined. In still another the integrity of the effect was injured because the entrance hall was separated from the stairway landing by a wooden railing of Colonial design, which was totally out of keeping with the stone panelling of the hall and its marble floors. The catalogue might be continued; but the foregoing will give the reader some idea of the mistakes which have been actually made in the halls of houses, all of them

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

about twenty feet wide and all of them designed as a transitional apartment between the street and the living-rooms.

One of the happiest features of the hall in the house under discussion is its method of communication with the stair-landing and with the passageway to the dining-room. On that side of the room the wall is broken into three arches, through one of which passage is obtained, while the other two are enclosed up to a height of about three feet by a continuation of the wall. Thus the identity of the hall is preserved, while at the same time one's eye is tempted to look into the rest of the house. The passageway to the dining-room, which is reached by walking up the two steps and through the arch, is paved with Moravian tiles, and the railing of the stairway is an excellent example of modern wrought-iron design. The stairway itself is of wood. Stone would have been more in keeping; but there are obvious reasons why an architect cannot use as much stone as he would like. The iron railing does not rest upon the wooden stairs, as a wooden railing might, but maintains its character by being fastened into the sides of the stair treads.

I have dwelt chiefly upon the entrance hallway, because the illustrations of this room show the reader really what it is, and he can check my observations with his own. In the other rooms there is very little design which does not depend chiefly on the use of colours; and illustrations in black and white cannot help the reader to appreciate a scheme of decoration which depends so largely upon what the reproduc-

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HALL AND STAIR LANDING



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tion fails to show. A reproduction of one room in colours would supply a fair notion, not of the quality of the different tones in which the room is finished, but of their relative value. The effect is derived from the rich red pattern fabric on the wall, the grey of the mantelpiece, and the dull blue with which the spaces between shallow beams of the ceiling have been filled.

It should be remarked also that in this house the error of overcrowding the rooms with furniture and ornaments—the besetting defect of the great majority of contemporary houses—has not been committed. The sense of space and the proper relative importance of the architecture of the room are always preserved.



DINING-ROOM IN RESIDENCE OF NORMAN HAPGOOD, ESQ., NEW YORK



PAVILION AND GARDEN, " FAULKNER FARM "

CHAPTER III

THE AMERICAN COUNTRY ESTATE

WITH a few exceptions "great American estates" are the creation of the past twelve years. The majority of them are probably not more than five or six years old. Formerly the well-to-do American satisfied his craving for country residence with a villa at Newport or elsewhere. These villas sometimes assumed "palatial" dimensions, and were decorated on a scale of princely splendour; yet they remained none the less villas—country houses erected for habitation during a few months in the summer and generally surrounded by a comparatively small amount of land. But of late years Americans who could afford it have been showing a disposition to live in the country for more than a few summer months and to take more pleasure in the characteristic occupations of country life. The villa with its few acres of land no longer satisfies their needs. They want big country places, equipped with all the conveniences and properties belonging to the great English estates. A survey of great American estates would show the manner in which they have satisfied this want, and give one the opportunity of making certain general comments on the tendencies exhibited by the design of these country places.

The most obvious comment would be that these

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“great American estates” are estates more by way of assumption than of architectural achievement. They are, indeed, large enough and conspicuous enough to be called without exaggeration an estate of the country; but in certain other respects they have failed to qualify for that dignity, and have remained, from the point of view of architectural design, more in the lowly position of villas. When a villa is being built upon an acre or two of land, the house is, of course, the thing, and whatever treatment the grounds receive is wholly subordinate to the situation, the scale and the composition of the building. On the other hand when a residence is erected on an estate of five hundred acres, the house should become merely an incident in the layout of the whole estate. The land should be planned in reference to all of the requirements of the owner, and the location and the design of the house should be subordinate to the exigencies of such a plan. The layout would bring with it inevitably a certain treatment of the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the house, and of the flower-garden, into which the house, like any other architectural feature, would be settled. It is evident, however, in the case of these American “estates,” no such course has been followed. They have been laid out much as the villa plots of two or three acres used to be laid out. No sufficient advantage has been taken of the fact that the owner of the estate controls probably all of the surrounding landscape, and is in a position to take the whole of the estate as his unit of treatment. The design of the house is not adjusted to the layout of the land. On the contrary,

THE AMERICAN COUNTRY ESTATE



THE END OF A GARDEN

the layout of the land is adapted to the location and the design of the house—both of which are selected or prepared without much reference to the plan of the estate considered as a whole. It is the house which the American considers first, last and always—no matter whether the house be a villa or a palace in a park.

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

The overwhelming majority of American house-owners would undoubtedly fail to appreciate the force of any criticism of American methods of design based upon the foregoing limitation. They would take it as a matter of course that the house was the thing, and that any landscape treatment should be subordinated to the design of the house; and the attitude which they have instinctively taken in this matter is the natural result of their whole point of view towards country life. The owners of the big English estates live in the country, and sojourn for some months of each year in the town. The owners of the large American estates are still essentially townsfolk, who are only sojourning for a few months of each year in the country. The period of this sojourn is longer than it used to be; their houses are kept open all winter, and are occupied frequently for week-end parties. Still their relation to the country remains essentially casual and artificial. They raise a few vegetables for their own table, a little corn for their stock, as many cows and horses as they need for their own use, and flowers enough to decorate their houses. These things are merely the conveniences and properties of country life, the care of which is turned over to hired employees. The point of view is as different as possible from that of an English country proprietor, who generally derives an income from his estate, and is attached to it by all sorts of family and personal ties, and whose house has settled down into an architectural efflorescence of a neatly parted and combed landscape.

To the well-to-do American, on the other hand,

THE AMERICAN COUNTRY ESTATE

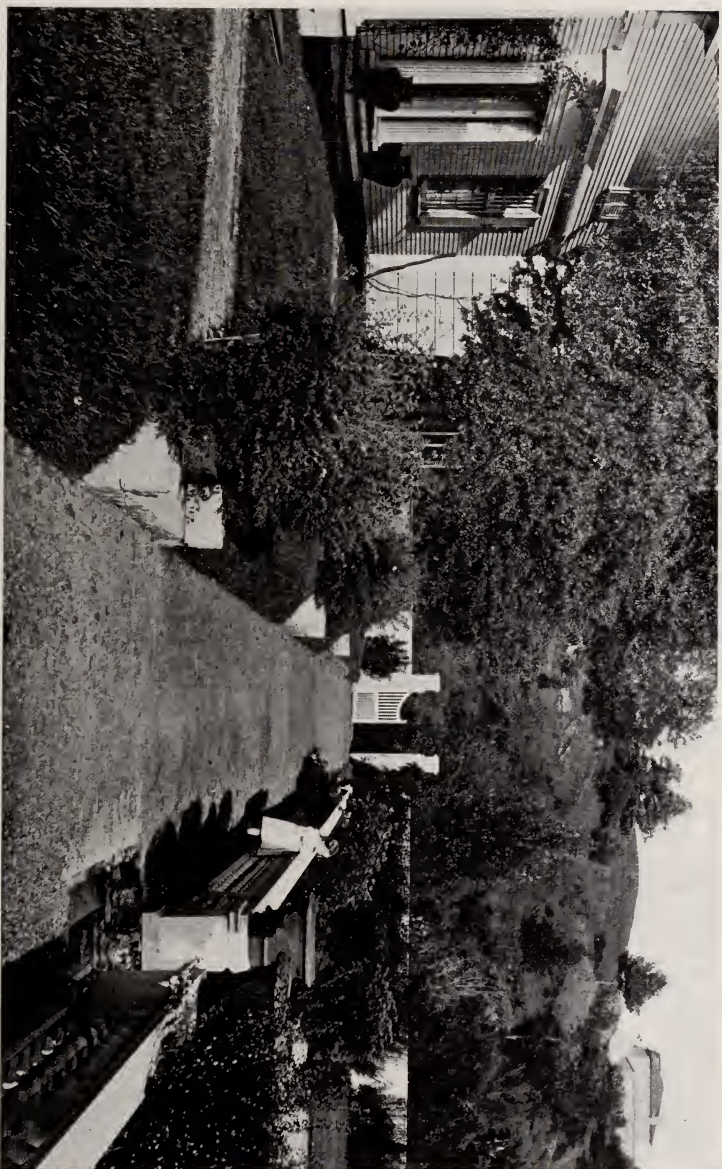


PAVILION AND GARDEN, "FAULKNER FARM"

his estate is only one of the spoils of his financial conquests. He may take a genuine interest in certain country sports; but beyond that in "returning to the country" he is merely adapting himself to a tradition which his common sense tells him is a good thing for himself and his children. The country means to him a country house within an hour or two of New

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York; and the architect whom he employs inevitably adapts himself to his client's point of view. The estate generally contains a hill overlooking the surrounding country, which is the inevitable site of the dwelling, because our American barons, like the feudal nobility of old, prefer to perch their castles high, and have their domains at their feet. They wish to see, and to be seen. The house becomes the most conspicuous object in the landscape, and the pervading purposes of the landscape design will be to give access to the house, and when there to command, the view. Indeed as a rule nothing more than this is possible. The crest of the hills rarely contains enough space for any very elaborate and well-organised landscape treatment. The garden is merely an incident to the view, and its minor beauties cannot compete with the great effects of distance, of sunshine and shadow, of cloud and foliage, of varied colours and solid form, which a fine big view offers. Of course there are many estates the residences whereof are situated on comparatively level ground, and in which a better opportunity is provided to design a house and garden the æsthetic purpose of which is less spectacular and more domestic and substantial; but these opportunities betray just as plainly the pre-occupation of the owner and the architect. The grounds are generally slurred. The garden and the other landscape accessories are inadequate to the scale of the house. The buildings and the architectural "features" and furniture are too conspicuous in the total effect. The planting is for the most part ill-managed and insufficient. One rarely gets any



HOUSE AND GARDEN OF CHARLES A. PLATT, ESQ., CORNISH, N. H.

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sense from these estates, as one does from the Italian villas and their gardens or from the English country mansions, that the architecture belongs to the landscape. In the case of the Italian villas, their propriety as country houses is fundamentally a matter of intelligent design. In the case of English mansions, it is fundamentally a matter of persistent and wholesome country life on the part of their proprietors. But whatever the cause, the result is a harmony between the house and its environment resulting neither from a mutilation of nature on the one hand, nor from any architectural irregularities on the other.

The comparative ill-success of American landscape design is partly due to the artificial point of view toward country life that takes it as a Saturday-to-Monday variety-show; and it is partly due to the inexperience of American architects in this branch of design. They fully intend to tie their houses well into the landscape, and give the immediate and natural surroundings of the house a pleasurable and habitable form; but they have to contend with many difficulties. The American landscape, even in the older parts of the country, is generally unkempt, and does not lend itself as readily to formal treatment as does the typical English or Continental landscape. The owners of the big estates rarely appreciate the scale on which the landscape architecture should be laid out, and the patience necessary to obtain a complete and consummate effect. They want ready-made estates. Finally the leading American house architects have, with a few exceptions, a good deal to learn about the technique of landscape design.

THE AMERICAN COUNTRY ESTATE



A GARDEN PATH

So far as the large house itself is concerned, a convention has been established which is in the main a good one, but the designing of gardens is still in an

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early experimental stage. The stage properties are collected in abundance. There is no lack of pergolas, fountains, well-heads, gazebos, statuary, and pottery; but as like as not they are indiscriminately placed. The architectural features, are, however, generally somewhat better managed than the planting, which frequently looks as if an Irish gardener had been given some vague general directions, or as if the lady of the house had considered that it was a woman's business to make the garden green. As a matter of fact, however, the lady of the house, in case she has her own way, generally paints the garden yellow and red rather than green. Her idea usually is merely to get as much bloom as possible; and this she does at a sacrifice of those masses of foliage which are absolutely necessary to give mass, body and depth to a large garden.

We Americans are too apt to believe we can achieve a complicated and admirable result merely by virtue of good intentions. We assume that because the owners and the architects of these large estates have sought in good faith to rival the classic examples of landscape architecture, and because in so doing they have created houses, gardens, and estates, according to some sort of general plan, they have already succeeded. But these first attempts should be regarded not as successful achievements, but as well-intended experiments. Before the experiment can reach the stage of mature and finished accomplishment, the owners of these estates must have learned to live in the country, and have come to regard their estates as something more than the spoils



A TERRACE, " FAULKNER FARM "

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of their triumph and as the scenery of their social exploits; they must have learned literally and metaphorically to cultivate their gardens. Country life, if it means anything except a vacation or a shifting of the scene for a round of city sports, should mean a patient, leisurely, submissive, and even a contemplative habit of mind. Nature cannot be hurried or bullied or bought into yielding her fruits, intellectual or material; and the owners of these country estates have hitherto been as a rule trying to buy their way into her treasure-house. With the help of their architects they have made a fine show of succeeding; but no matter how much the owners of these houses mistake the appearance of success for its reality, it is very important for American architecture that disinterested observers should not make the same mistake.

It would be equally a mistake to believe that the design of American country estates has made an entirely false start. Undoubtedly the chief concern of their designers, both as regards the interior and the exterior of the houses, is to make a fine big show—and once this show has been obtained they do not stop to consider how far this splendour of appearance is likely to prove permanently satisfactory. As a matter of fact it is sure to be as little satisfactory in the long run as any other stage-setting. Life in a millionaires' "colony" at Newport may be turned into a spectacle, but genuine country life must become something else. None the less it has for the present a certain kind of suitability. It pleases the tastes and meets the needs of the people who own these estates; and it performs



PAVILION AND RESIDENCE

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these services in a way which is on the whole æsthetically meritorious. The American business man wants the strong sensation of magnificent domestic surroundings; and he believes that he can make this magnificence authentic by deriving it from the forms and relics of European palaces. Neither are the fruits of this conviction so inappropriate as they seem. The American millionaire sometimes controls resources as large as the personal revenues of a European prince; and he possesses by right an analogous, if not a similar, social outlook. If he has no social inferiors, he also has no social superiors. He is free to express his tastes without the fear which a European "bourgeois" must always feel of being presumptuous and ridiculous. When such a man finds himself in the possession of more money than he can spend it is no wonder that he adapts his habitation to his income rather than to his occupations and customs. He is full of the pride of life and the self-confidence of success, and has no one to consult but his wife.

Of course he may have to consult his architect too; but the architect has no call to pluck the æsthetic ambition of his client. He can only accept a condition of this kind and make the best of it. His first duty is to design and decorate a house which will please and interest its owner not only because he has no chance of personal success on any other footing, but because it is right and appropriate that a man's house should be the sort of thing a man likes. If the sort of thing a man likes is hopelessly meretricious, an architect can decline to fill the bill, but if he

THE AMERICAN COUNTRY ESTATE

agrees to fill the bill, he is also obliged to cut the clothes to fit the man. Then the architect himself is not prone to be a person of ascetic tastes. As like as not his preferences will run in the direction of the "stunning" thing; and if his client wants a howling palace, why should he deny the demand? As a matter of fact, of course, he does not deny the demand; he merely fills it to the best of his ability; and his ability is frequently very considerable—particularly so far as the design of the house alone is concerned.

The demand of the rich American that his house and its surroundings be made interesting to him is perfectly legitimate; and in the long run it will be a good thing for American domestic architecture that a positive and lively standard of æsthetic effect has been thereby popularised and established. No matter what the penalty, we do not want in this country a prevailing convention of house embellishment whose greatest merit consists in a sort of unobtrusive refinement. Since we are young, it is better to be a little barbarous than prematurely sober. Assuming that the better Americans will be capable of assimilating a sound sense of the æsthetic proprieties, the barbarism may become informed without any loss of vitality. Indeed the "palatial" period of American domestic architecture is already on the wane. The newer houses, while they still proclaim loudly their owners' opulence, indicate the influence of better ideas of propriety, architectural and social; and it may be confidently expected that the future movement will run in the same direction.

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

While, however, the "palatial" house is losing some of its noisier improprieties, it is not the houses of the very rich which constitute the best contemporary achievement of American domestic architecture or its best hope for the future. These houses receive most attention because they are the most spectacular, and because their proprietors are the financial heroes of the day; but they are not intrinsically the most interesting. Their owners frequently want a good thing, and their architects are skilful; but both good intentions and skill tend to be vitiated by the fact that whatever else the houses express they must inevitably express superabundant wealth. Americans do everything with their wealth except "forget it." The result is that there is too much of everything—too much gilt, too much furniture, too much upholstery, too much space, too many styles, too much ceiling. What these houses and grounds require is not a negative refinement, but a thoroughgoing simplification. In many cases comparatively simple architectural schemes have been smothered by a multitude of irrelevant and unnecessary trappings; in other cases the design itself needs simplifying. Wherever the over-richness and elaboration comes in, the great necessity with which every collection of these houses impresses the observer, is this necessity for more simplicity; and in houses built by the better American architects for well-to-do people who are not inebriated by their opulence one is much more apt to find designs that are simple without being attenuated.

The most interesting contemporary American

THE AMERICAN COUNTRY ESTATE



AN EXAMPLE OF TRUE STYLE

country houses are apt to be those which cost between twenty thousand and one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. When their owners spend less than twenty thousand dollars, it is rare that an architect in good standing is employed, because his fees are proportionately larger for an inexpensive than for an expensive job. The small house-builder has an

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impression, not altogether erroneous, that the modest house does not get its fair share of attention in the big office; and even in those offices which do give their best services to the small client it is unusual that a really complete house and garden design can be realised for twenty thousand dollars. On the other hand, as already pointed out, the owner of a country place that costs several hundred thousand dollars or more, generally wants his money to make a big show, with a result, which, however admirable and interesting in certain respects, betrays its hybrid origin in its flamboyant appearance. The formula for this result is a million dollars of building enriched with historical relics and tempered by architectural academies, but the house which costs between twenty-five thousand and one hundred and fifty thousand dollars has a fairer chance. When it is given to a good architect, which unfortunately is not often the case, it at once provides a decent opportunity without dispensing with the salutary necessity of economy. Such a house is more likely to be thoroughly designed than is the bigger or the smaller house—designed, that is, without reference either to irrelevant and oppressive superfluities on the one hand or mutilating omissions on the other. The economic scale of a house of this class harmonises with the normal life of a well-to-do American family; and it has the chance at least of reaching the final grace and propriety of a domestic building—a propriety which is constituted as much by integrity in the owner's tastes and manners as by the strictly architectural skill of its designer.



A PERGOLA

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

It should never be forgotten that the making of the consummate residence depends as much upon the prevalence of right ideas and good taste among house-owners as upon the ability of the architect to design a good-looking and appropriate house and grounds. The future of American public and commercial architecture rests chiefly with the architects. Limited as they are in many directions by the ignorance of politicians, and the indifferent or meretricious taste of business men, they are gaining authority which will enable them to make American public and industrial buildings edifying and beautiful or the reverse. But in the case of residences, all that the architect can do is to supply a well-formed and fitting frame and scheme to a picture which must be finished by the people who live in the house. No matter how intelligently the designer may adapt a dwelling to its inhabitants' manner of living it will not æsthetically belong to them until they have added to its effect the imprint of the kind of life they lead and the sort of domestic appurtenances they prefer. This is not so much the case in a country the finest dwellings of which belong to an aristocratic class with certain common traditions, as to the manner and symbols of their domestic life. In such cases the house will require only an impressive impersonality of effect, which is attainable by an architect. But Americans are individuals before they are members of any class or social group, and the individual note is necessary to any American dwelling that is all an American dwelling should be.

The difficulty with many interesting residences is



HOUSE AND TERRACE, " FAULKNER FARM "

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that a good architect has either had too much or too little to do with them. In the former case the effect, however beautiful, is necessarily impersonal and perhaps a little frigid,—as if the fire had gone out on the æsthetic hearth, or the family were afraid to warm their hands at the blaze. A man should not be afraid of his house any more than he should be afraid of his butler. A house with which its owner dares not be familiar may be good-looking but can hardly be gracious and charming. On the other hand there are many houses the owners of which have insisted upon planning and decorating the interior and laying out the grounds with only clerical assistance from an architect; and it cannot be too emphatically asserted that this is not the proper way to secure an excellent, much less a consummate result. Remember that I am confining this part of my discourse to “interesting residences.” Houses which express merely vulgar or commonplace proprietors are excluded. The point is that even people of good taste and genuine likes and dislikes about the appearance of their homes probably make a mistake in dispensing with the services of a good architect. It is possible, of course, that an amateur may have a natural instinct for design that will enable him to do better for himself than anybody else, however skilful; but ninety-nine times out of one hundred the training, the experience and the gift of the professional man is necessary to give any complete form to the result. Without the architect the result may be individual and charming; but it can only rarely possess that highest quality of style.



A VINE-COVERED PLAZA

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

This quality of style is of all æsthetic qualities the most difficult to describe. It is so simple and unmistakable in its effect, yet so complicated and evasive in its origin. I cannot attempt to define it, but perhaps some idea of its meaning can be inferred from the enumeration of several important elements of effect, the omission of any one of which would rob a dwelling of true style. It implies for one thing a certain integrity in the formal design of a building—the working out of an appropriate architectural idea in a manner both consistent and interesting. It implies in addition to this fundamental correctness of design the power to awaken relevant and suggestive memories. A “stylish” house must express the derivation of our own good domestic manners from certain former distinguished ways of living by recalling without necessarily copying the architectural forms and materials associated with these desirable manners. All this can be contributed by an architect; but he cannot contribute the final touch of propriety—the sense that the house is a house in which an individual with some integrity of life and taste has dwelt. The inhabitants of the house must complete the picture planned, framed and sketched in by the designer; and the fact that the designer has contributed so much need not diminish in any way the ultimate individuality and charm of the result. It merely gives to the total effect style as well as expressiveness.

A house and garden can hardly be permanently satisfactory without some such quality. Americans build, it is true, for only one generation; and the

THE AMERICAN COUNTRY ESTATE

children destroy or neglect the structures which their fathers have reared with labour and love. But it may be hoped that the better country residence of to-day will commend itself to the next generation by its power of satisfying certain permanent domestic and æsthetic demands. This power cannot be granted to houses and gardens which are intensely and exclusively individual. Such a house dies with the man or woman that makes it. Indeed, frequently its propriety, the mood which it embodies, no longer pleases even its owner, and consequently instead of being mellowed and confirmed by the dignity of years, it is totally transformed. But a house which possesses style, which answers permanent æsthetic needs by the use of appropriate and pleasurable forms—such a house may be perpetuated by its own perennial value, and by its own flexible charm. The so-called “Colonial” house has been the only type of American residence to possess anything of this quality; and “Colonial” houses are preserved for this reason. On the other hand the neo-classic temples and the Gothic villas which succeeded the “Colonial” house appealed only to an arbitrary and evanescent architectural whim, and survive only because of possible economic value. In regard to the houses of the present day, it looks as if many of the most expensive “palaces” will fail to be interesting at the end of thirty or forty years. I certainly hope that such will be the case, because these houses, whatever their architectural merits and temporary propriety, are places in which a man not stupefied by his own opulence could not possibly live. Nevertheless there

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are some dwellings planned upon a smaller scale which may prove to be permanently satisfactory; and if the good American architect, in building such dwellings, will only keep in mind the fundamental necessity of simplifying both the design and the ornament, the proportion of the permanently satisfactory houses will increase.



A BOUDOIR

CHAPTER IV

THE TYPICAL COUNTRY HOUSE

IN the preceding chapter I declared that the better American work in domestic design is being achieved in houses which cost somewhere between twenty-five thousand and one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. An illustration, if not a proof, of this statement may be found in the pictures of the house at Mount Kisco, New York, to which we may now give our attention (pages 88, 91, 95). It is distinctly a medium-priced building, although it tends towards the upper rather than the lower end of the limit. The scale of the place is precisely that which should commend itself to a well-to-do gentleman in search of a country residence. It is not so large that its inhabitants become insignificant compared to their appurtenances; yet it is large and handsome enough to give an effect of ease, good taste, hospitality, and well-favoured abundance. The people who occupy it at least have a chance of living a country life for its own sake; and if in the present instance the surroundings suggest an interest in sport rather than an interest in the more fundamental rural amusements, that is merely a matter of individual preference. The fact remains that the house starts on its worldly career in a right-minded condition, and does not betray either an incongruous pretension or a self-conscious humility

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

and reticence. It is what it pretends to be, and it pretends to be something good and appropriate.

The exterior is in no particular style, yet it immediately arouses associations with a sound and attractive style of domestic architecture. It is a balanced composition, well scaled in its subordinate members, frank and simple in its detail, and both picturesque and vigorous in its total effect. The design of the interior possesses similar characteristics. The living-room is not only spacious and comfortable, but what is a very different thing, it gives the sense of being spacious and comfortable. It is not filled with irrelevant and futile properties and adornments. It is simply a fine large room, panelled to the ceiling, in dark wood, and furnished in any style you please. It is large enough to hold the two Davenport lounges—an article of furniture which is as modern as it is excellent in the right place—and some good solid, comfortable chairs. For the rest its very bareness is attractive. There are not many things, but whatever is, is right—among which may be mentioned the snug way in which the book-shelves are fitted into the walls. Some objections may be taken to the scale of the very beautiful mantelpiece, to its relation with the panelling behind, and to the brick lining of the chimney, which would have looked better in a greyish tone; but these are minor blemishes. They diminish by very little the substantial value of this unusual example of a living-room in which one might like to live.

Neither is this favourable impression disturbed by the glimpses which we obtain of the other apart-

LIVING-ROOM IN HOUSE OF J. BORDEN HARRIMAN, ESQ., MOUNT KISCO, NEW YORK



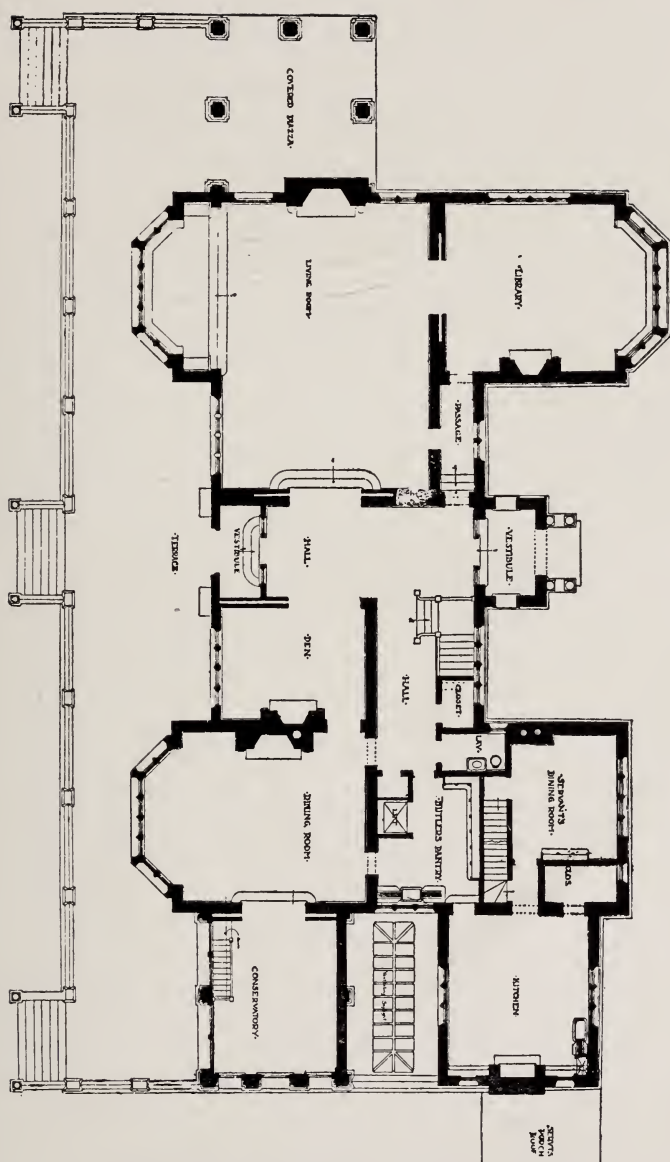
HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

ments. The stair-hall is as plain and businesslike as a stair-hall ought to be; while the boudoir is charming in spite, or rather because of, its refreshing simplicity and its perfect fitness. The little dark cabinet and desk are not in keeping; but even they do not detract very much from the integrity of this pleasant little room.

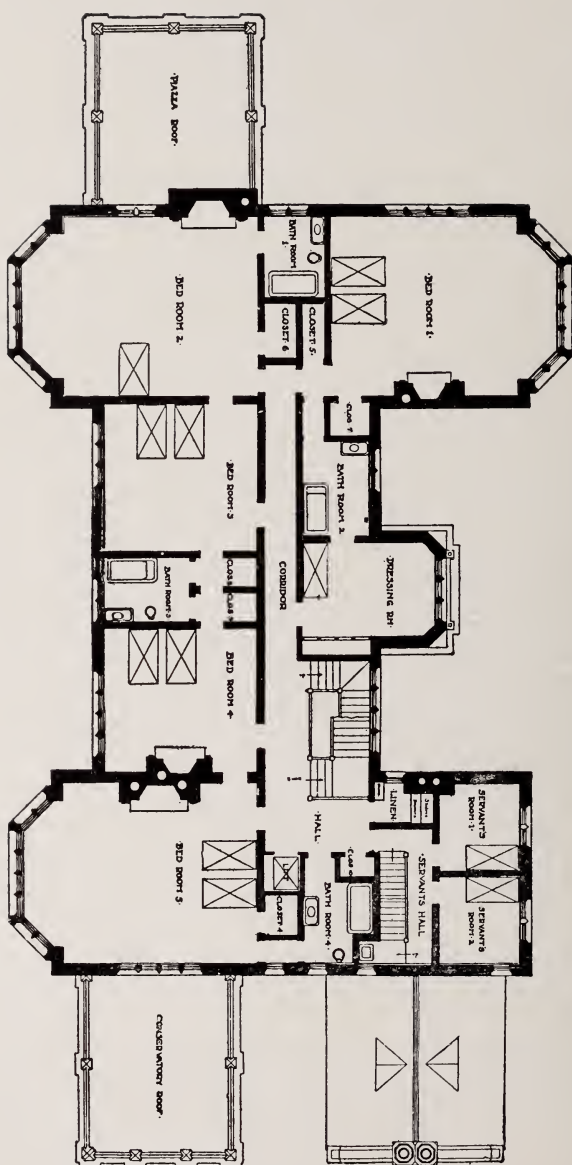
Inasmuch as this house is only recently finished, it still requires the confirmation which comes from several years of use. The grounds have not received the attention they will eventually get, and the rooms are still of course aggressively new; but the occupants of the house are to be congratulated upon the start towards a most satisfactory result.

Similar in type is a house at Parkersburg, West Virginia, in which the architect has chosen a treatment with characteristic flat, hipped roof, far-projecting eaves, cemented panelled walls, separating timber work, sharp projecting towers carried up in bold dormers; low smooth chimneys and generally clear-cut silhouette. It is the design of one who seems to delight in sharp contrasts as between differently coloured materials, and makes frequent use of wood and cement on the exteriors. Deep and luminous shadows, too, seem to have exerted strong fascination.

The often excessive projection of the eaves gives a chiaroscuro effect, and reveals in a diffused light the mottled texture of the cement work in contrast with the well-shaped and finished timbers that divide the wall space. The house is well developed æsthetically; has something to stand on, grows



FIRST-FLOOR PLAN FOR A COUNTRY HOUSE



COUNTRY HOUSE BEDROOMS



STAIRCASE IN MR. J. BORDEN HARRIMAN'S HOUSE

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naturally from the soil, and does not give the appearance of being dumped down.

The illustration shown on page 98 shows particularly well what is meant. Here we have a foundation of perfectly plain, but well-shaped brick, with a smooth bevelled cement water table which is carried around the retaining wall of the steps, broken out in a platform in front of the door and topped with a brick parapet in rough cement treated similarly to the surface of the walls. Potted plants and vines form very useful accessories in the treatment, deftly softening the otherwise hard lines where the masonry penetrates the ground.

The house being but one story high, naturally presents, with its deep shadows, bold tower dormers and well-grouped windows, a very charming little home. A nearer view of one of the doors (page 97), the one which is shown on page 98, reveals in the deep shadow of the eaves several interesting features of decoration. A simple but very effective lamp is suspended from the endmost rafter by slender chains; the glass of the door, as well as of the high square windows on either side, is attractively treated in lead strips and colour; the panels under each of the windows are framed with a delicate raised moulding, the field being beaded and occupied by an ingeniously conventionalised plant ornament in delicate relief. Even the leaders which conduct the rain water from the eaves back to the wall and down into the ground hardly offend one's sense of propriety by cutting, as they do, through the air and across the panels between door and windows. On



DETAIL OF A DOORWAY

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A SIMPLE TREATMENT OF BRICK AND PLASTER

the contrary they seem quite proper and intentionally a part of the decorative scheme. The interiors offer less of interest, the variety of fireplace treatment being the most inviting detail.

The illustration given on page 99 is worthy of a passing note. The frame panelling of beautiful bird's-eye maple is well managed, and shows wood used in a proper and very successful way; the panels

THE TYPICAL COUNTRY HOUSE



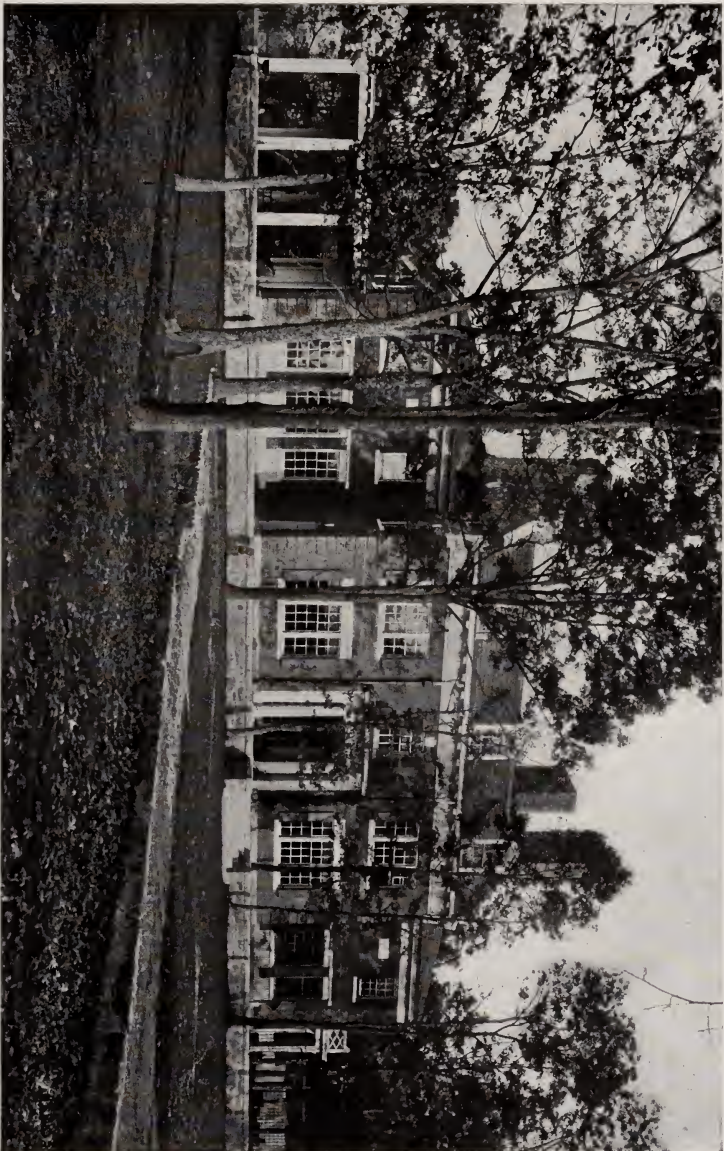
A WALL TREATMENT

are happily composed, the rails and stiles forming an effective border around the chimney opening, which is further softened by a parallel ring of metal over the arched top and domical hood, which besides its ornamental function, is also useful for preventing

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smoke from easily blowing into the room, as well as for shielding the woodwork before mentioned. Altogether it is a very successful fireplace obtained by simple means, which, with our gaudy and vulgar tendencies, is something rare and cannot be too highly commended. The broad flower frieze running around the room is an ingenious device for cutting down the height of the ceiling, and gives scale to the room. The other interiors show similar treatment of the walls with simple frieze decoration. In the dining-room we have a highly decorative glass and metal lamp, but much richer than the one that we noted over the entrance. It starts rather abruptly from the perfectly plain ceiling and is, perhaps, a little vigorous in design for its purpose.

In another house by the same architect, we immediately recognise many similar characteristics. The front of the house stands on a very low cement base, so low that one is compelled to look at the nearer views to make it out. It is nevertheless there, and serves its purpose well. Compared with the Parkersburg house, this is a really large establishment, but lacks somehow the picturesque charm of the smaller one. This shortcoming is, however, amply compensated for by an air of repose and dignity, due largely, no doubt, to its sharp, clean-cut masses. Except on the back where several small inconsequential dormers modestly proclaim the existence of attic rooms, the roof is broken by chimneys only, and in an unemphatic way. The two towers, which are coupled together over the entrance in a balcony, though appropriate and attractive enough



A HOUSE AND ITS GROUNDS

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

themselves, do not combine happily. They give the effect of two columns whose bases are not on the same level. The architect has evidently tried hard to make them as different in shape and treatment as possible; in the octagonal one the vertical lines have accordingly been emphasised and continued to the base, while in the rectangular one the vertical lines are abruptly terminated at the second floor in the form of a heavy horizontal timber and a floor, which throws the first story of this mass into the entrance porch. A large screened veranda is a useful, as well as an effective, architectural appendage to the house.

Another view shows a simple, but very admirable wooden stair, in which the characteristics of the material are satisfactorily brought out. It runs up in the octagonal tower of which we have just spoken; this accounts for the curving inside string which conforms in its rise to the general shape of the mass in which it mounts. If we go back to our peculiar tall tower, by the way, and regard it as a staircase enclosure, it explains itself more to our satisfaction, even if we do not altogether approve of the treatment that has been accorded it in the massing of the composition.



A SIMPLE STAIRCASE



AN ELIZABETHAN HOUSE IN DETROIT

CHAPTER V

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR

OF all the types of private dwellings now being erected in this country none presents more features of interest and promise than the semi-suburban residence of Western and Middle Western cities. The suburban house in the East is rarely so interesting and typical. Of course there have been many expensive and carefully designed dwellings of this class erected in and near New York and Boston; but the immense majority of suburban and semi-suburban houses along the Atlantic coast line are cheap houses, designed by local builders, while the more well-to-do generally live in houses that lose their individuality in the block. On the other hand, in cities like Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit, Milwaukee, and even Chicago, the comparatively excellent means of communication and cheapness of accessible land have encouraged a much larger proportion of families to live in detached houses, and the popularity of motor-cars has rendered houses of this kind still more practicable and accessible.

They have certain definite characteristics. They are built by the owner from designs prepared by the best architects in the vicinity. The amount of land by which they are surrounded varies from a hundred feet to several acres. As they cost on the average

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

somewhere between twenty-five thousand and fifty thousand dollars, they represent precisely the ideas, the tastes and the standards of the prosperous American business man. Such a man cannot afford and generally does not want the exotic splendours of the Eastern millionaire, but he does want a comfortable house, the looks of which are, as they should be, subordinated to convenience, but which, nevertheless, is supposed to have some æsthetic merit; and this comfortable atmosphere is largely derived from the modest and unambitious scale of the whole performance. In the big house of the East comfort and propriety are sacrificed to the "stunning" effect. In the better Western house of the prosperous business and professional man the intention of the owner is to build a dwelling in which he and his family shall be both in the picture and thoroughly at home.

The æsthetic quality of these houses may perhaps best be described as containing the usual American mixture of excellence in intention coupled with miscellaneousness of effect. These houses are eminently comfortable, "homely," and "bourgeois." One can trace their descent unmistakably from the mid-century residences of the Eastern part of the country, which embodied the taste of the average well-to-do American of that time, rather than the taste of specially trained and instructed people. But there is one important difference between the two types of dwellings. The mid-century dwelling was rarely the work of a well-qualified architect. The contemporary dwelling of the Middle West is the work, so far as design and plan are concerned, of



AN ELIZABETHAN COUNTRY PLACE ON LONG ISLAND

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



RESIDENCE OF SAMUEL CABOT, ESQ., NEAR BOSTON

the qualified architect, but an architect who is rarely in a position to do a completely finished job. He designs, of course, the exterior and proportions of the openings, the disposition and the detail of the various rooms; but beyond that the decorations and the furnishings of the dwellings are the work either of the head of the house or of some decorating company. As in the latter case the decorating company adorns and equips the rooms to suit the taste of the client, the total effect is one which represents the average taste of well-to-do people rather than the higher taste of those specially trained.

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR



DOORWAY AND APPROACH

The total effect consequently is apt to lack the architectural quality, the quality of careful composition, of the subordination of detail to a single dominant idea, and of careful search for stuffs and furnishings. The impression is too apt to be one of upholstery—of apartments overcrowded with big stuffed chairs, heavy, spacious tables, curtains and coverings that jump out in large flowery patterns, and many other comfortable and commonplace things; and such is the effect, in spite of the fact that the intention evidently is to do something good.

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Indeed, the rooms, in spite of their homely appearance, have also the air not only of trying to be artistic, but of seeking to conform in their artistry to the latest æsthetic ideas. The result of these conflicting tendencies is colonial rooms without a trace of the Colonial reticence and distinction, with Colonial furniture that is machine-made, too clumsy or too cheap and fragile. In spite of the considerable sums of money spent on some of these houses, the effect is generally that of a very commercial decorative art—commercial not in the excellent economic sense of obtaining a good result at small cost, but in the unfortunate sense of obtaining a poor result at comparatively high cost.

The employment of professional decorators is partly responsible for this result. It is very rarely that effective interiors can be obtained by making different designers responsible for the architecture and the decoration of a room. One man or one firm should do all the necessary designing, and the function of the professional decorator should be to carry out the architect's ideas. Within these limits the decorators can perform an important and indeed an indispensable work, because by their control of capital they can collect large amounts of good decorative material which the architect can use. But American interiors will never be what they should be until it becomes customary for the architect to see the design through to the end; not only because there is no other way of obtaining unity and integrity of effect, but because the architect, whatever his limitations, alone represents a good æsthetic tradition.

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR

The American business man and his wife have, of course, no æsthetic traditions at all, and no informing attitude towards such matters, except the wish for cheerful and comfortable surroundings. The professional decorator may have in his employ designers as competent as the average architect, but he has the fatal defect, for the purpose of good æsthetic results, of lacking the professional tradition of disinterestedness. He is in the business to make money, and in order to make the money he cannot run ahead of his clients' tastes. Neither can he sacrifice, as a designer must occasionally do, the profit on a job to the necessity of repairing a mistake or reaching a better result. He may know better, but he cannot afford to risk his business and time taking care of his clients' æsthetic education. He works entirely by routine, and he accomplishes the sort of thing we see.

Nevertheless, whatever the defects of this kind of dwelling, the prospect for a gradual improvement of design is full of promise. The architect is constantly growing in authority, and in time he will be able to control the planning of dwellings from the foundations to the finish. Wherever he succeeds in accomplishing this the result should be good both for him and for his clients. His clients have every right to insist that their houses shall be not merely conveniently planned, but shall also be pleasant to inhabit. We have no sympathy with the æsthetically austere and ungracious rooms which some architects seek to force on their clients. The demand for a cheerful, comfortable and homely atmosphere in

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HOUSE WITH UNENCLOSED GROUNDS

a dwelling is absolutely legitimate, just as the demand that the interior should be thoroughly designed is legitimate; and it is the action and reaction between these two demands which will most effectually serve to give American interiors the mixture of propriety and distinction which they need. At present distinction is too often obtained at the expense of propriety and comfort, and propriety and comfort too often obtained at the expense of distinction. In order to combine distinction with propriety the architects will have to educate their clients to add to their houses a pervasive individual and familiar atmosphere without interfering with the integrity of the design; and he will also have to live

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR



HOUSE WITH GROUNDS ENCLOSED

up to the highest standard of professional and technical rectitude. His great advantage consists or should consist in the fact that he wishes to control the whole design in the interests of his client. If he swerves from this high technical and professional ideal, he will not obtain his full rights.

In the East well-to-do families generally have both a city house and a country place, which architecturally are sharply distinguished from each other; but in the West this is much less frequently the case. There are, of course, many fine country houses in

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

the West, such as those grouped around the shores of Lake Geneva, in Wisconsin; and particularly in Chicago many of the older families occupy houses, which, although detached from their neighbours, are substantially urban rather than suburban dwellings. Nevertheless, on the whole, the well-to-do Western business man, in building a new residence, will probably choose a site for all the year, containing two or three acres abutting on a street and surrounded by the grounds of similar dwellings.

Such a house is planned as a permanent residence. It is situated in a neighbourhood accessible from the man's place of business, and is occupied both summer and winter. It has enough land around it to permit the enjoyment of some of the pleasures of the country, and to afford an opportunity for a certain amount of landscape treatment; but not so much as to be any more than the front and back yard of the house. As an architectural type it is intermediate between the town and country house.

We give in this chapter a typical example of this class of dwelling, and it is also an excellent example thereof. It exhibits some of the best tendencies to be found in the design of such buildings. It is a fine, large house, surrounded by abundant land, and treated in a manner appropriate to its location on a street. The house itself has been situated as near the street as its height would permit, and consequently much the larger part of the grounds are available for a garden and tennis court situated in the rear. This arrangement gives the inhabitants a pleasant

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR

playground, partly screened from the street, and spacious enough for all kinds of country sports and pleasures.

The fact that this outdoor play-room is only partly screened from the street suggests one of the most interesting and important questions connected with the design of houses of this class—the question, that is, whether the grounds should or should not be enclosed by a wall. There can be no doubt that from the point of view of the most interesting and complete architectural treatment of these places, there should be an enclosure. That is the one way in which the house and its grounds can be architecturally united, in which irrelevant and incongruous surroundings can be shut off from the garden. Without the enclosing wall the occupants of the house can never come into complete possession of their grounds; and the architect can never tell how soon his most carefully-designed landscape scheme will be spoiled by the architectural performances of some neighbour. The preservation of the æsthetic individuality of such a suburban place demands the enclosure of the grounds.

In a great many cases these enclosing walls have been constructed, but in more instances they are omitted. They run counter to the popular American preference for a semi-public private life. To shut your neighbours off absolutely from the yard of your house strikes the ordinary American as exclusive and “stuck-up”; and it is not an easy matter to wean him from this conception. Of course, as a matter of fact, there is no more reason why an out-

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

door playground should not be kept as private as an indoor living-room; but so far the practice of walling in the grounds around a house has the force of custom against it. Whatever the motive in the present instance, the architect has managed to secure a fair amount of privacy without the use of an enclosure. Not only are the garden and tennis court screened by the house, but the shrubbery at either end of the building will, when it has obtained its full growth, still further protect the "backyard" from a passer-by on the street. The treatment of the garden back of the house is adapted to the absence of any enclosure. In fact, it can hardly be said that there is any garden at all. In the middle of the large stretch of lawn, and on an axis with the enclosed porch, a rectangular space has been sunk; and in the centre of this space is a pool with a flower-bed at either end.

The house is plain and even severe in treatment, and it has dignity without the slightest pretension. It is simply an interesting and very careful piece of brick-work, without any of the stone trimmings with which so many Eastern architects like to spot and line the surface of their brick walls. A single course of stone marks the line of the ground floor, and the window sills are similarly distinguished. The windows are small and not capped by any ornamental members whatsoever. The only important ornamental feature of the building is a strong string-course of terra cotta, cutting off the top floor; and this is well, because the top floor evidently contains a large number of small rooms, and is consequently

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR



A WESTERN ENTRANCE

distinguished from the other floors by the numerous windows which its plan demands. The entrance porch is treated with the same simplicity and the same respect for the dominant material. Its appearance is not complicated and falsified by any scheme of applied decoration; and the two columns which hold the lintel have a structural function. Its whole effect would perhaps be a little austere for the majority of Eastern house-owners; but it is a

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salutary thing that the Western architect can sometimes dispense with the decorative irrelevancies so often demanded in the East.

The architecture of the interior is characterised by the same plain consistent treatment. There are no imported mantelpieces, no white paint, none of the carpenter's version of classic and Renaissance detail, no Gothic ceilings, and no "period" furnishing. The finish is simple and substantial throughout. All the rooms are more or less completely panelled, and when the panelling does not cover the walls, the intervening spaces are treated generally with a solid colour. The lines of the beams and of the cornice are very strong, and the different parts are tied well together. The wood-work is stained a dark brown; none of the ordinary classic mouldings are used; and no doors are hung between the principal rooms. One apartment opens into another without the interruption even of "portières," and the reader will notice that no curtains keep out the light from the windows, which serves to explain the smallness of these openings. A pleasant sense of being spacious, conveniently planned, and well connected pervades these apartments. They are a worthy example of an architect's interior; and if the effect of the inside is like the effect of the outside, a little austere, it is, on the other hand, not in the least negative, or flat, or attenuated.

Similar in intention of design are three houses which are good examples of Western work of the better sort, combining a certain freedom of treatment not so often found in the East, with a dispo-



AN EXAMPLE OF SIMPLE BRICK WORK

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

sition to remain faithful to desirable traditions of residence design.

The problems presented by the several houses are very different; but the several treatments of these problems possess much the same qualities. In each instance the forms used are simple and straightforward and well adapted to the peculiarities of the site.

The house in Minerva Avenue, Chicago, is a modest two-story and attic building, situated immediately on the street, and especially designed for this location. The architect has taken advantage of every opportunity for variety of effect and for saliency of treatment. The entrance porch instead of being merely applied to the building is really attached to it by its enclosure within a wall running parallel to the building. This wall is broken by spots marking the entrance, and is capped by a course of white stone. The overhang of the roof with its strong shadow helps the wall of the porch to line the house up with the street, while at the same time it assists the white window and door frames to provide agreeable contrasts on the front of the little building. The effect of the roof is a little like that of a man who pulls a broad-brimmed hat down over his eyes; but such men usually make an interesting appearance.

The interior of this house is very attractive in its excellent use of comparatively small spaces, and in its simple and consistent treatment. The living and dining-rooms are practically one apartment, separated by bookcases that stand out into the room as

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR



AN ALL-THE-YEAR-ROUND HOUSE

screens, but united by similarity in the lines and the effect of the wood-work, the character of which harmonises with the "Mission" furniture. It is very rare to find a house as small as this so completely designed and finished. Even the tables and chairs in the "Mission" style are well selected both for comfort and avoidance of the ordinary uncouth solidity of this kind of thing.

The house at Milwaukee is much larger, and is detached from its neighbours. The size of the lot is, however, not large enough to permit much of any landscape treatment, and the design, adapted to the

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A SLIGHTLY REAR

suburban character of the surroundings, is marked by simplicity and refinement. It is a plain, honest piece of brick-work, varied, like the Chicago house, by white wood-work and crowned by a roof with an overhang that makes a strong shadow. The upper story is cut off from the two lower stories and joined to the crowning member by a string course of white stone, and by being made of plaster instead of brick. The arrangement is attractive; but its attractiveness is diminished by the way in which the upper line of bay window cuts off the windows of the third story.

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR

It would have been better to keep the front flat, and also, if possible, to have given the plaster some modest surface decoration. Altogether, however, this is a very legitimate piece of work, and one which has a chance of becoming charming when the bleakness of the surroundings is properly relieved.

It is, however, a residence at Canton, Ill., that is the most conspicuous success. In this instance the site is large enough to afford a chance for landscape treatment, while at the same time it is so near its neighbours that it cannot be considered as an isolated country place. The architect has managed admirably to adapt the design of the house, and the layout of the ground to a situation which is countrified without being entirely in the country. The long line of the house is parallel to the public road, from which the grounds are separated by a brick wall, low enough to give definiteness of enclosure, but not high enough to seem exclusive. The house is approached by a straight driveway, which turns in to the back of the house, but which is reached from the front of the house by a brick walk running the whole length of the façade. The building is situated on a slightly higher level than this brick walk—a level which is emphasised by a stone terrace, from which the rooms of the house are entered by a couple of stone steps. The entrance proper is at some distance from the road, and is marked by the projection of a large gabled room over the brick and stone terrace, carried by plain brick piers. The design may be classified as a free example of half-timbered work, which is sufficiently picturesque and irregular to



HOUSE OF MR. ORENDORFF, CANTON, ILL.

THE HOUSE FOR ALL THE YEAR

look well in the background of the neighbouring foliage, but which at the same time is a well-balanced composition. The effect of the place is wholly charming.

The immediate surroundings of the house have been formally treated; but the formality has never for a moment degenerated into emptiness and rigidity. The house is at home on its site; the land round about has been kept genuinely natural in appearance. There are very few all-the-year-round houses in this country in which such a balance of desirable qualities has been preserved.

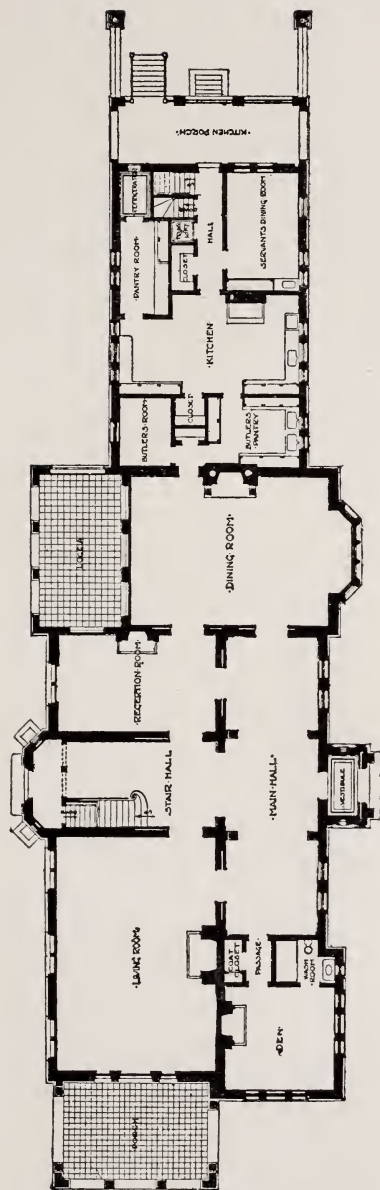
The interiors are, perhaps, less successful than the exterior. They show a preference for a simple, consistent scheme, which in the case of the living-room has the appearance of being original as well as attractive; but the value of this scheme has not been preserved in the somewhat incongruous furniture and hangings. The dining-room is more consistently realised; and the other apartments look as if the architect had been a little fancy-free in this house, which is, of course, a good thing to be.

CHAPTER VI

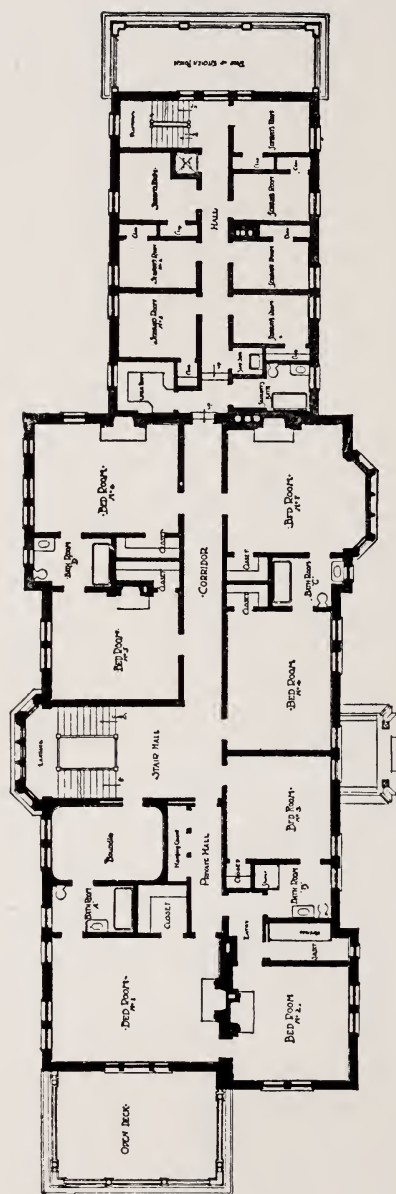
THE HALL AND THE STAIRS

THE growth and development of the "hall" in the American house is rather a curious thing, for whereas, in the house built previous to 1860, the hall was in nearly every case an entry exclusively, it has since become in many cases a recognised sitting room. The entry of the old-fashioned house was wider or narrower as the dignity of the house might seem to make necessary, and where wide it might contain a sofa, and on very hot days of the North American summer furnish a place to sit in and enjoy the breeze. Yet it still contained the "hat-rack" and the "umbrella-stand"; it still had, to light it, only the open door and the narrow "side-lights," and it was still furnished or left unfurnished as a passageway alone. The floor would be covered with oilcloth, the walls would affect a surface of uniform tint or perhaps imitate in the papering blocks of stone or marble. The stairs went up at one side against the wall with no pretence at shutting off or concealment.

Since the close of the Civil War there has been a disposition in country houses to make the hall square and spacious, even if by so doing the other rooms of the house on either story are somewhat crowded or are diminished in number. It seems to be assumed



MAIN FLOOR FOR A COUNTRY HOUSE



COUNTRY HOUSE BEDROOMS

THE HALL AND THE STAIRS

that the hall is a sitting-room so desirable in itself that something should give way to this disposition. Even in cities and in the deep and narrow houses used there, with their windows only in the narrow walls of the front and rear, this same arrangement of a square hall has been popular, and although in that connection many householders object to it altogether, many again are found who use it and even advocate its introduction.

When, however, the hall is to be treated as a sitting-room, it becomes altogether desirable to shut the staircase off and separate staircase from hall by a screen or by something more than a screen, namely, by a solid wall with an opening more or less wide. The door itself may not be hung in this opening—it may be better dressed by hanging curtains, or portières; but at all events the two apartments are better when entirely distinct.

The term staircase, I may mention in passing, is used in the sense given in the Dictionary of Architecture and Building as meaning “the structure containing a stair,” the “stair together with its enclosing wall.” In this sense it is here maintained that staircase and hall should be separated as far as the size of the house and the disposition of the plan will admit.

Thus in the illustration shown on page 151 there is indeed no way visible of closing the opening between the two apartments, but otherwise the plan is an ideally good one. The hall has windows, it accommodates bookshelves, a great fixed sofa, tables and chairs; and it forms an altogether agreeable sitting-

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A HALL AND LIVING-ROOM

room from which by two steps we mount to a second smaller sitting-room, a kind of recess with a stand and a chair and a picture which receives sufficient daylight, and from which you go up to the first landing of the stair, upon which again is a fixed seat and into which opens a window in the rear wall. There cannot be a pleasanter form of division than this.

Again, on page 131, there is shown a hall with heavy oak table and bookshelves; there are steps which take you up to a dining-room with a recessed window, and by another entrance you reach the foot

THE HALL AND THE STAIRS



A RAISED DINING-ROOM

of the main stair, which in this picture is only just indicated.

If, now, we consider the stairs themselves, with the hall as being primarily the place for the stairs only—that is to say the staircase—one arrangement is to have the staircase-hall leading directly into the library, but in itself allowing of access to the stair and nothing else except a door in the wainscoting.

An always attractive arrangement for the hall is in a strictly Old Colonial fashion with verdures for the wall hangings, a high and deep Empire sofa, with

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

a mirror hanging above it whose frame with the hooks smacks of the same early epoch; and the stair itself with its long and wide landing is an excellent piece of the stair building of a hundred years ago. In some instances there is carried out in the best manner that picturesque and most interesting scheme, in which the newel of the stair is formed by a spiral turn of the hand-rail supported by a multiplicity of little balusters exactly like those of the ramp of the stair above. This is, indeed, a most fascinating device.

Page 133 seems to be a modern composition in the same spirit, and it must be owned that the soffit of the stair in its upper part beyond the square "quarter pace" is more strictly true to precedent than in cases where a continuous sheathing replaces the moulded underside of each step. Another view of the same staircase shows a very broad and imposing set of glazed doors leading from the outer vestibule to the stair-foot.

The people of a hundred years ago, in the great wooden houses of Beaufort and along the James River and more rarely in the North, used to affect the double stairway, one with a central stair leading to the "half pace" and two stairs leading from that platform to the landing above. Good instances are to be found in many modern houses.

Other halls give, in a pleasant way, memoranda of the simpler and smaller staircases of our forefathers, showing those arrangements by which the stair was partly sheltered from draughts and the persons ascending and descending were partly shel-



A MODERN COLONIAL HALLWAY

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A MODERN COLONIAL STAIRCASE

tered from observation. These are always dangerous to the designer, because the raking lines of the stair are always difficult to manage, and produce ungainly spaces, shapes and combinations. The best are the simplest, and ones closely built in are to be found in many modern houses, hiding from the spectator all the sloping hand-rails, wainscots, baseboards and the like. Indeed, the more a stair can be built in between walls generally the better it is.

The hall of the Kip house gives the details of an extremely magnificent dwelling, one built on the

THE HALL AND THE STAIRS



AN EFFECTIVE NEWEL POST

lines of the Jacobean houses of Great Britain. In such a house as this there should be no elevators nor other modern conveniences except, perhaps, the electric light, which may be admitted to noble mansions in England, chiefly that it may the better illuminate the artistic treasures of the building itself and its contents. The Oriental weapons on the walls should have a special electric light whose beams may be thrown full upon them in order that the admiring visitor may see the details of those



A JACOBAN STAIRCASE



A STAIRCASE AND GALLERY

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A TYPE OF HALL AND LIVING-ROOM

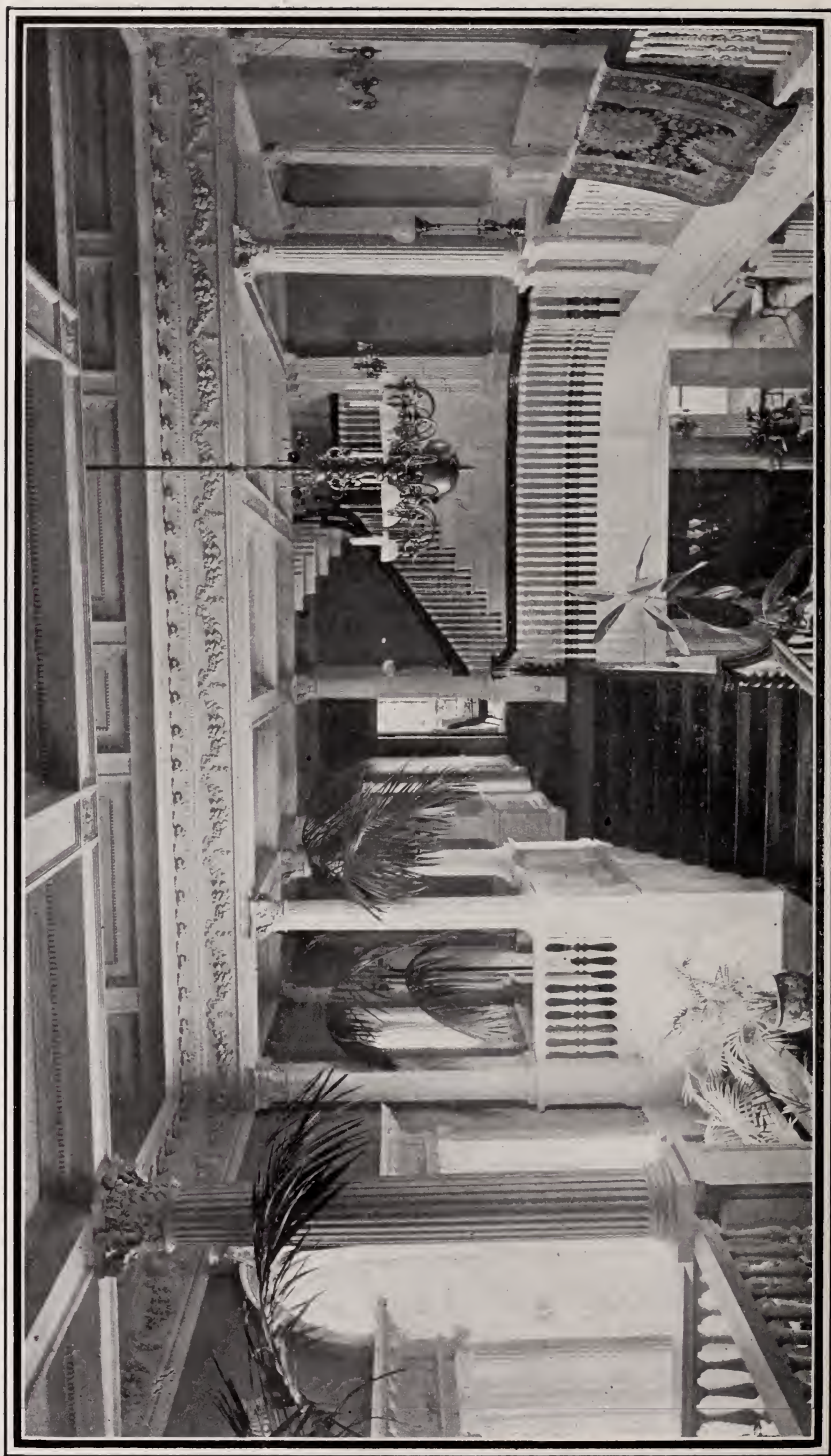
curious arms without asking that they be taken down for his examination.

The hall of the Clarence Mackay house at Roslyn, Long Island, has a stair of great splendour, with parapets filled with Roman scroll-work carved in the solid wood, pierced through and sculptured on either side. Such a stair, for richness and brilliancy of effect, is worthy of Blickling or Hatfield.

There are some interesting bits of hall and passage which are not at all connected with the stair. Thus the landing at the head of the stairs may be partitioned off to form a lobby—more enclosed and less



A VESTIBULE



A GOOD EXAMPLE OF AN UPSTAIRS HALL

THE HALL AND THE STAIRS



A LIVING-ROOM OPENING INTO THE HALL

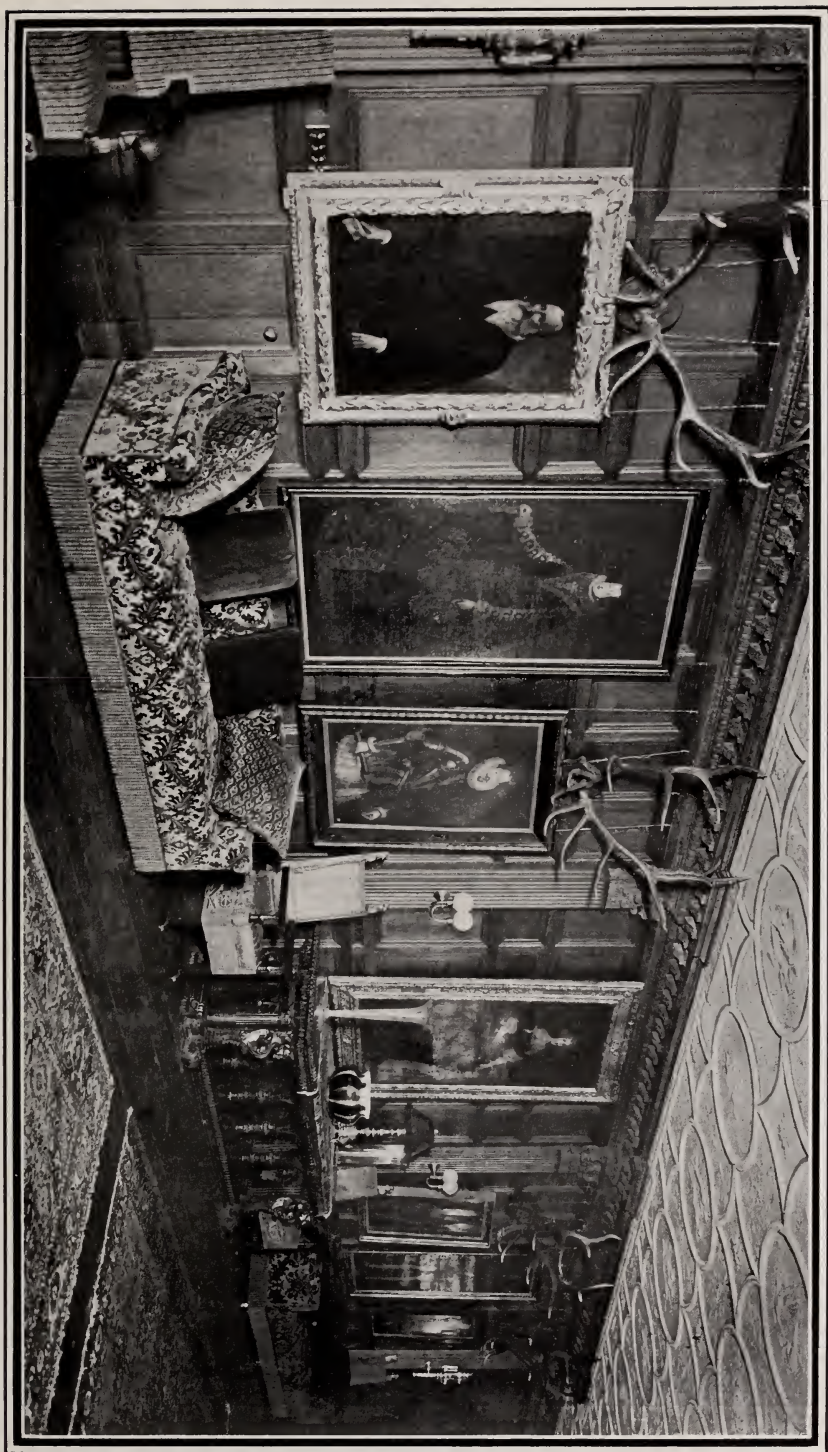
accessible than an open hall would be—to the bedroom beyond. Such an enclosed hall is a most attractive and generally simple composition. A large hall may serve as outer sitting-room, while a smaller inner room is three or four steps above it in front.

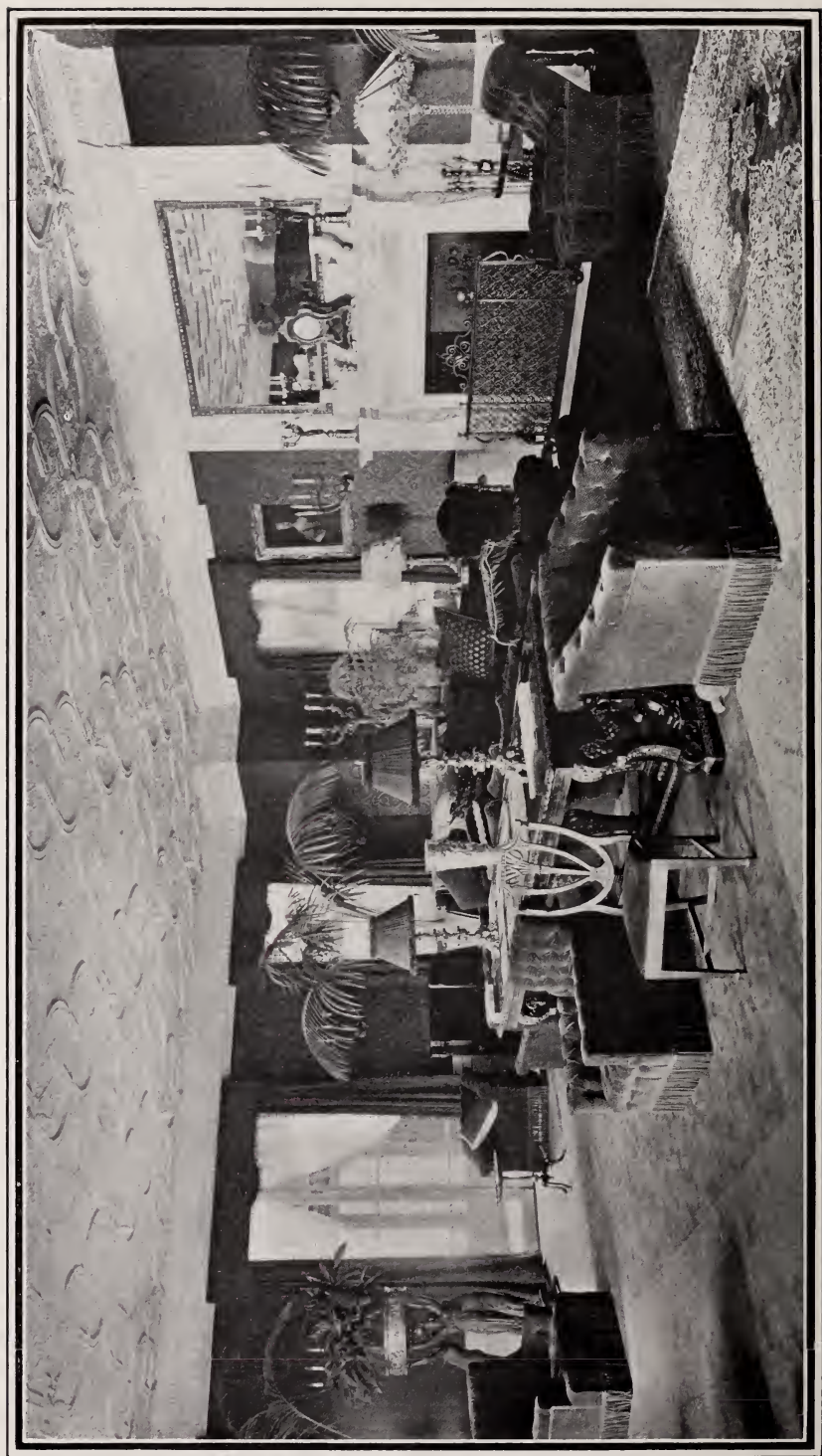
Page 146 is not attractive from the number of levels seen in it. The large hall where we stand leads through a great opening to what seems a dining-room on the left and it is not at all separated from the hall itself by door or curtain, and on the right we go up two steps and again three steps more

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

to other parts of the house, these connecting in a way with the stair itself. This hall with its sofa, its cottage piano, its comfortable chairs and stands bearing lamps, is evidently a place of habitation, and the framed pictures on the walls show refined choice in works of art.

HALL IN HOUSE OF THE LATE W. C. WHITNEY, ESQ., WHEATLEY HILLS, LONG ISLAND





LIVING-ROOM IN HOUSE OF THE LATE W. C. WHITNEY, ESQ.

CHAPTER VII

THE LIVING-ROOM

THE size and arrangement of the living-room will of course depend very largely on the foregoing considerations in the matters of the hall and stair:—indeed, these three features of the plan of a house of moderate cost are so mutually dependent that either one can hardly be discussed without constant reference to the disposition of the others. Much of what has been said above on the subject of halls will, therefore, have more or less weight in deciding on the placing of the living-room.

When the site is spacious enough—as in the country—to allow of a certain amount of freedom in the orientation of the house and its parts, the first consideration will usually be given to exposure and outlook; and this will be of more especial importance in the placing of the principal rooms. Thus, in warm localities it is desirable that the living-room should face toward the prevailing summer winds; and, further, if the house is to be occupied throughout the year, there should be some windows with a sunny exposure. So in the vicinity of New York, it is well to place the principal apartments along the southerly side of the house; and the offices and subordinate rooms to the north.

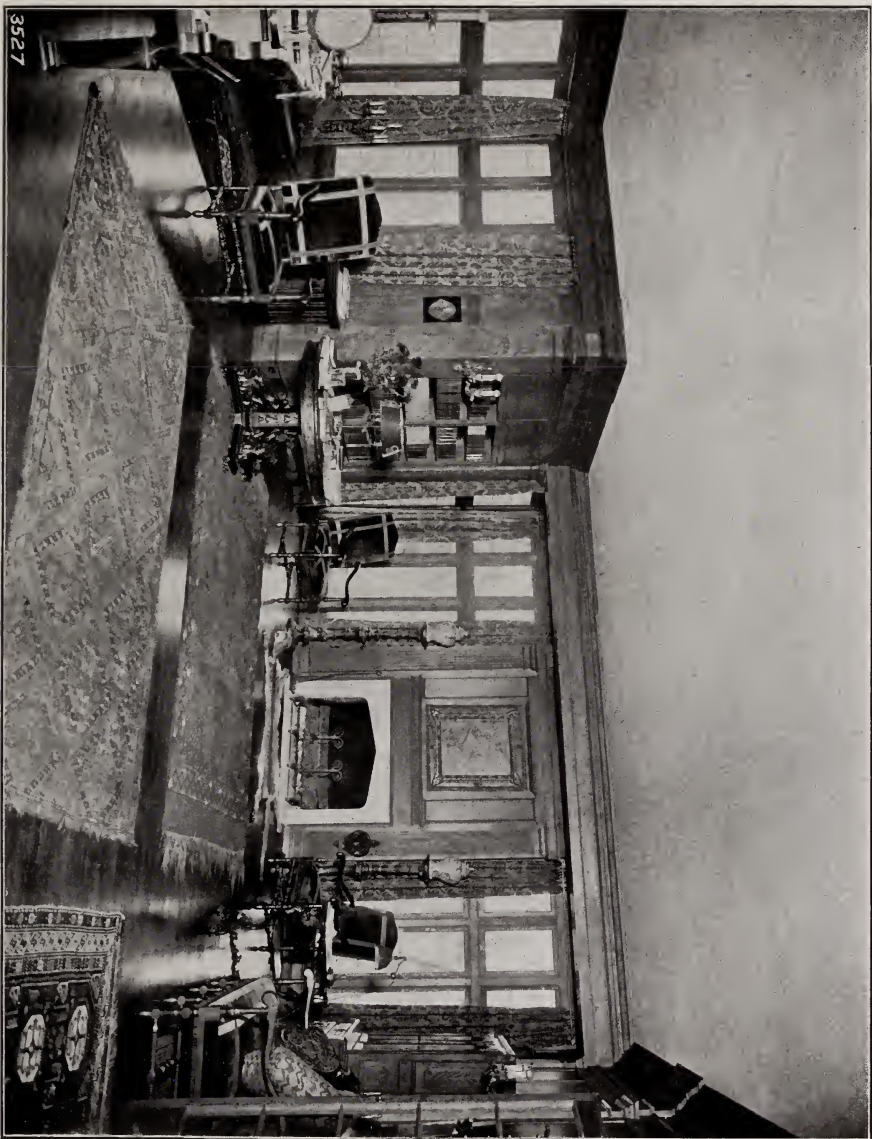
The question of the library is for our present pur-

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



MAKING USE OF STEPS

pose connected very closely with the living-room. What we are discussing is the dwelling in which the library and living-room will very often be one and the same. Even in the case of the hard worker with pen or typewriter, the room where his books are kept is usually the sitting-room, he being free to reserve a workroom opening from it, of which he can shut the door and in which he can arrange his thoughts undisturbed and construct the lecture or the article which goes to make him the breadwinner.



3527

AN EFFECTIVE DRAWING-ROOM



A PANELED DRAWING-ROOM

THE LIVING-ROOM



HALLWAY WITH BOOKS

There is, however, another side to it, for in some houses the living-room is also the drawing-room. Many a family takes nearly this view of the situation—viz., that there must be a relatively large, airy and spacious room for the family sitting-room and for the more intimate guests, while a comparatively small reception room is used for the visitor who calls in the way of mere ceremony, or in the way of business, or on a single occasion without the immediate prospect of intimate acquaintance with the family. We shall see in our illustrations examples

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A LIVABLE HALLWAY

of both these schemes, but first let us consider those rooms which are living-rooms and nothing else.

Thus in the room on page 149 the arrangements make for comfort and convenience; the room on the right (raised by two steps) is evidently a plant room, a conservatory of that sort which accommodates itself well to the interior in which the family are to live; and this is not shut off by any door, the connection being by a wide opening, which makes of the conservatory a kind of bay window of unusual size and importance. Then in the room itself there is

THE LIVING-ROOM



HALL WINDOWS

another bay window used as a recess for the fixed sofa, with the awkward but evidently inevitable device of a register for the heat and for the ventilation shown on its upright side. On either side of the simple brick chimney-piece,—an admirable fixture which one longs to see more often in these tranquil domestic interiors,—there is a window commanding a view of trees and open country, and of these windows one is short, with a sill raised very high to allow of bookshelves below it. The encroaching radiator is the only blot on this charming composition. If, as is most probable, the beams of the

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A LIVING-ROOM WITH EXTRA HEIGHT

ceiling are really the working timbers merely boxed with boarding or finished off with moulding, we can leave this sitting-room with the feeling that nothing more delightful is likely to come our way.

Something of a similar character is to be found in the room shown above—a room in that Evanston which is overshadowed by the renown of its great neighbour, Chicago. Here the one-story house is so treated that the low walls of the sitting-room are helped out by the slope of the roof; so that the room,

THE LIVING-ROOM



AN EFFECTIVE DORMER WINDOW

not more than seven feet in the eaves, rises to eleven feet or more in the middle. Commonly this arrangement has the unfortunate result that the daylight is not admitted from a sufficient height above the floor, but in this case the putting in of a capitably conceived dormer window on the right remedies the possible difficulty and gives us in part, at least, a sufficient lighting for whatever in the room may need to be seen by full daylight.

Again on page 153 are seen the arrangements of the same room from another point of observation.

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A DOMED CEILING

This is a noble sitting-room indeed, with windows in three walls and a great brick chimney-piece. Other illustrations of the same house will be found on pages 121 and 122, and the architect is to be congratulated on his success in designing this dwelling.

Some rooms carry farther than usual the arrangement of the windows flanking the chimney-piece—windows high in the wall, with bookcases below them and, in short, a familiar arrangement carried out to its logical extreme. There is no doubt about

THE LIVING-ROOM



DRAWING-ROOM OF GENERAL DRAPER, WASHINGTON, D. C.

the advantage of the plan from the point of view of receiving daylight freely at the most agreeable side of the room. In many instances, however, there does not exist that other advantage, the looking out-of-doors as you sit by the fire, for (probably from different local causes) it is thought best to fill these windows-frames with decorative glass of a pretty design. It is a good thought to arrange these windows as casements with hinges by which they may swing freely into the room.

This matter of the sitting-room extends itself inev-

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



ANOTHER VIEW OF GENERAL DRAPER'S DRAWING-ROOM

itably into the larger library. But as to the real drawing-rooms, the rooms arranged *en suite*, we have them at their best in long rooms opening into each other.

One long room with perhaps two chimney-pieces, may be hung with tapestries with figure subjects on a very large scale, and furnished with sofas, chairs and *fauteuils*. Such apartments cannot be considered sitting-rooms in the ordinary sense, and yet in summer how delightful to inhabit! There is no place quite so cool as a very big room with a

THE LIVING-ROOM

moderate current of air entering at the windows and doors. Such a current of air ceases to be a draught—it does not worry you with fears of to-morrow, it allows the whole room to remain sweet and pure with a steady temperature. Give us for our summer evenings a room not smaller than forty by seventy feet.

CHAPTER VIII

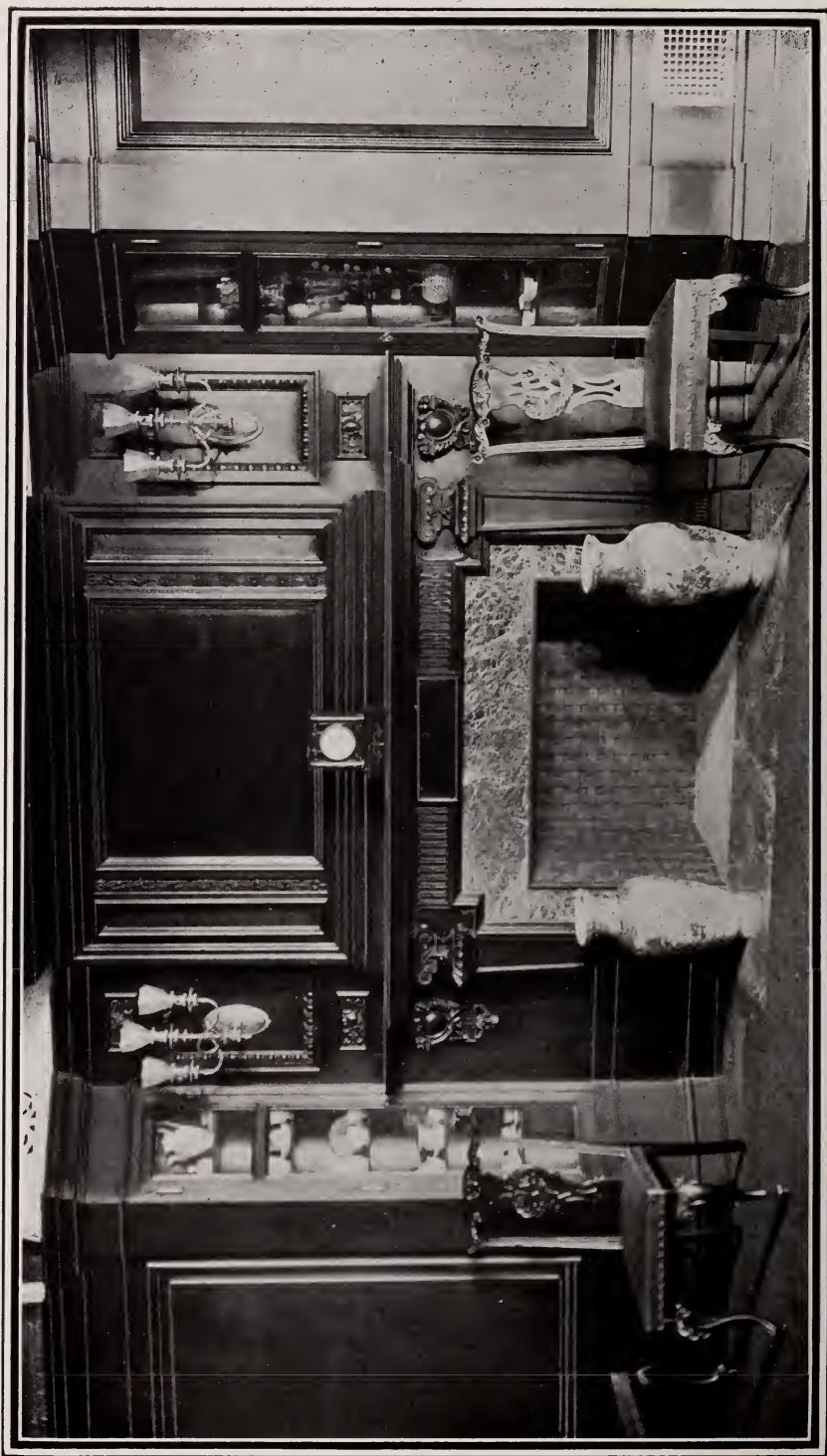
THE DINING-ROOM

THE considerations of exposure and outlook, discussed in the previous chapter in connection with the living-room, apply also to the dining-room. Here, however, the question of outlook is not of equal importance, because the dining-room will not be used habitually for other purposes than the serving of meals. When it is to be so used—when the dining-room is also the family sitting-room—the conditions of the two classes of apartment have to be considered simultaneously; and the case becomes too complex to be provided for except in connection with the immediate site and the house-plan.

As for the internal arrangement of the dining-room in its more usual capacity, this is governed mainly by the form and disposition of the table—especially of the dinner-table, which may sometimes differ in size and arrangement from that used at other meals. If an extension table is to be used, the shape of the room will tend to be relatively long and narrow, especially if it is to accommodate a large party at certain times. Thus a table for twelve persons needs to be eleven or twelve feet long, and nowadays not less than four feet wide. This will require a floor space not less than twelve feet wide for convenient service, and about twenty feet in length in



DINING-ROOM IN HOUSE OF CLARENCE W. BOWEN, ESQ., NEW YORK



FIRE-PLACE IN MR. CLARENCE W. BOWEN'S DINING-ROOM



DINING-ROOM AT "APPLEGARTH"

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



AN ELABORATE DINING-ROOM

the clear between the opposite walls, so that if the chimney-breast is at one of the narrow ends of the room this measurement of twenty feet must be taken between the face of the chimney-piece or of the mantelpiece and of the opposite wall. Again if the sideboard is to be put in at the end opposite the fireplace this also must be considered; for a space of at least nineteen feet is really needed for the proper service of the table when extended to a length of twelve feet. As for the width of the room, with a four-foot table, eleven feet in the clear be-

THE DINING-ROOM



A COMBINATION DINING- AND LIVING-ROOM

tween the walls, between fireplace and sideboard, between sideboard and service table, between any and all permanent obstacles must be maintained. This, of course, is an awkward shape for the room, and accordingly it is usual to give to the dining-room greater breadth than seems essential, and then to occupy this greater breadth with (as above suggested) the mantelpiece and the sideboard, or the service table, or both; in other words, the room within the walls may be nineteen feet by fourteen, a tolerable proportion; and all the large obstacles, more than once named above, may be put on the long

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A CORNER CHINA CLOSET

sides. It is here, of course, that the bookcases and the like will be set in rooms which have the double purpose of sitting-room and eating-room.

The disposition of windows for the proper lighting of this oblong dining-room is perhaps more difficult than in the case of any other apartment of the average house. The desirability of so arranging the windows that persons sitting at table shall not have their backs turned directly to the light, and of lighting the table equally throughout often bring about a problem difficult to solve with entire satisfaction. If conditions permit of placing the room so

THE DINING-ROOM



A WELL-LIGHTED DINING-ROOM

that there may be a skylight or a lantern-light over the table, or across one end of the ceiling—as in the case of a bay—a very effective interior may be had, and with but few openings in the side-walls. Ordinarily, however, this feature of the plan will be found impracticable for houses of moderate cost, and daylight must therefore be obtained from the side-walls only. Then, obviously, windows in one of the longer sides of the room will afford the most perfectly distributed light, and these windows should preferably be high in the wall—carried close up to

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A WESTERN DINING-ROOM

the ceiling, as, for instance, to a line twelve inches below it, and with high sills; the purpose being to throw the light downward rather than horizontally —over the heads and shoulders of the diners rather than directly on their backs. A very good plan has been made, in which the dining-room, of only moderate height, was unusually well lighted from two adjoining sides, the windows in each wall being close to the corners. This resulted in cross lights passing diagonally over the table from the ends, and the central position of each wall was available for

THE DINING-ROOM



A DINING-ROOM FIREPLACE

furniture. An equally good, and more artistically effective, design will result by lighting a long room from the two opposite ends; but the necessary condition—two opposite outer walls—will not often be obtained.

The foregoing considerations, based on the requirements of a long table and a correspondingly long room, will be found much modified in the case of the much broader table, in fashion about 1875 to 1890, and of the round dining table, the use of which appears to be increasing in popularity, and which

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



AN OLD-FASHIONED DINING-ROOM

demands less floor space for convenient service than a long table of equal seating capacity. Thus a round table five feet in diameter, or thereabouts, will accommodate a party of eight with comfort, while a diameter of some six feet will allow of ten or more seats. Hence a floor space of fifteen feet across will be ample provision for the table of an average household, making allowance for other dining-room furniture outside of this space. Such a table, then, can be placed at one end of the room, fifteen feet wide, and could be well lighted from that end wall, even with only one or two windows; and the entire room

THE DINING-ROOM



A COLONIAL DINING-ROOM

need not be more than perhaps fifteen by eighteen feet. If that end of the room can be treated as a bay, projecting considerably beyond the façade, it may be made a most attractive feature in the design of the dining-room. For instance, let such a bay have the form of a semi-circle or semi-polygon, with the table at its centre. Windows can then be provided all along the perimeter of the bay, leaving the wall spaces of the inner portion of the room for other furniture. This is an especially pleasant feature in a summer home, for nearly the entire extent of the

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A MODERN COLONIAL DINING-ROOM

outer wall can be made to open, so that the bay becomes almost the equivalent of a veranda.

It will be readily understood that the conditions of the room are nearly the same in the case of the square and of the round table. The point is, in either case, that the dining-room does not tend to be long and narrow relatively as in the days of tables intended to be adjusted in length to the requirements of a large party. The table of recent years, with its square or round or—less frequently—polygonal top, is not an extension table at all, but is fitted to receive

THE DINING-ROOM



STATELINESS IN THE DINING-ROOM

tops of different sizes; exactly as in a restaurant a number of circular table-tops are kept in stock, and according to the size of the dinner party the largest (accommodating twenty persons perhaps) will be put in place—or a smaller one accommodating fourteen, twelve or ten. Thus in the illustration shown on page 168 the room, being nearly square in plan, is so large relatively to the ordinary size of the dining-table that it would accommodate a round-top or square-top table large enough for sixteen guests, and this without causing a derangement of the furni-

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

ture in the room. Pages 161 and 162 illustrate similar large dining-rooms.

On page 169 is shown a room in Zanesville, Ohio, which is frankly designed in a modification of the Georgian (Old Colonial) style, and is a really excellent composition. The decoration includes the very obvious protection for the walls—the dado which in this case is carried up to a height of about seven feet and corresponds in height to the mantelpiece. The shelf of the mantel is carried around the room, though elsewhere it is narrower than over the fireplace; and this shelf, wide or narrow, affords the best possible place for exhibiting those bowls, platters, tea-pots, covered dishes and the like, which are among the treasures of the true lover of "old china." Such a collector puts his stately vases into his drawing-room and library; but the majority of the collector's pieces are not stately vases; and, in a way not perfectly explicable, the dining-room seems to be the more congenial home for the covered sugar-pots, the small tureens, and the huge Persian and Chinese bowls which, under the general name of "punch bowl," though not now used for punch, adorn the rooms of the happy few.

An attractive kind of dining-room is Old Colonial, in which the panelling goes almost to the ceiling, leaving only a very narrow strip of flat wall between the surbase of the woodwork and the plastered "cornice" above. It is not, perhaps, the most happy disposition; but the very strong and spirited plaster-work of a ceiling in a modified Jacobean style may call for the sheathing of the wall with woodwork,



SIMPLICITY IN THE DINING-ROOM

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

and suggest this as the most convenient plan. It has the additional advantage of giving to the ceiling the full size of the room between the walls; for if the panelling had been carried up to the flat surface of the ceiling, the room inevitably would have looked smaller.

In some modern houses one finds a dining-room of the neo-classic style, very much such a room as was devised for the wealthy citizens of 1825 and the years following. To our modern tastes the fully developed entablature and columns of composite order, brought so near to us on the walls of the room, may be severally a little aggressive. This, however, seems hypercriticism in view of the fact that the traditions of our most elegant American life of the time when men now old were born, all combined to make this seem the architecture of the Fathers.

One device for the dining-room walls is a simple dado and very simple woodwork of the character of our good village houses of the very beginning of the nineteenth century. The dado may be reduced to about the usual height of the chair-rail—that is to say, the wall may be covered with woodwork to a height of about two feet ten inches from the floor and from this, as from an architectural basement, rise the pilasters which adorn the corners of the projecting chimney-piece and of the recess opposite to it.

The room on page 168 is a most attractive room fitted up in the true taste of one who loves the tranquil village life of a century ago. It is in this way that the dining-room and sitting-room of a prosperous villager of 1800 and the years following were

THE DINING-ROOM



DINING-ROOM CONTAINING LIVING-ROOM FURNITURE

really furnished and adorned; and the architects who are the most constantly occupied with the dwelling houses of the children of those prosperous villagers—the men who build in the towns around Boston and along the North Shore—those architects tell us that the old traditions remain, and that the family who will spend several thousands of dollars for a painting will not expend money for the adornment of the interior—for the carving of the mantelpiece, for the inlaying of the columns—in short, they say that it is a Puritan tradition to spend nothing on your

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

house, whereas the Puritan tradition has nothing to say about the separate and portable work of art.

Other illustrations in this chapter show rooms with the now fashionable square table, rooms with elaborately carved table and chairs, rooms with a fireplace of unusual character, and rooms interesting for their snug compactness. It is an attractive display, a real picture-gallery of pleasant domestic interiors.



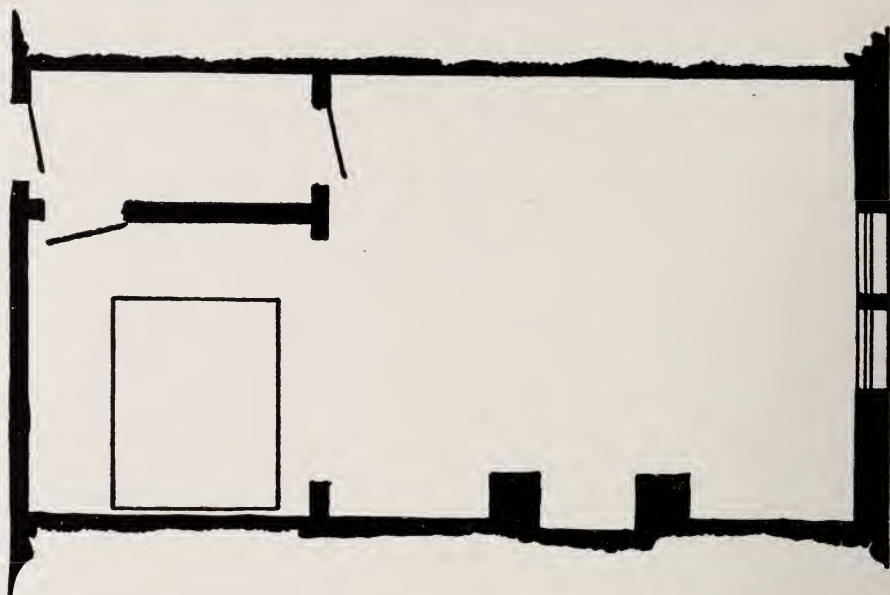
A BUNGALOW DINING-ROOM

CHAPTER IX

THE BEDROOM

THE French lady has always made her bedroom serve the purpose of a sitting-room. The French bedroom, at least in the cities, is on the floor with the *salon*, the dining-room, the library, and must inevitably form *suite* with them. The French bedroom, being a part of the series or group of rooms on one floor which are run together in a dwelling, has the same height of ceiling and somewhat the same liberal decoration as the more public rooms of the *appartement*. Indeed, in a reception or entertainment of any size the bedroom has to be thrown into the other rooms for a more or less free use by the guests and their hosts. This however, is done—this freedom of access is made possible, this employment of the room as one of a handsome series of rooms becomes natural—because of the disposition of the bed itself in an alcove which can be quite perfectly screened. The accompanying plan shows this disposition as it has been for many years. The large bedstead nearly fills the space of the alcove, which is in fact a small room with two openings in its walls; the one a wide doorway—for such indeed it is, though not closed by doors—treated as part of the ordinance of the larger room without; the other a quite narrow doorway, with a hinged door hung upon one of its jambs and

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



PLAN FOR A BEDROOM

intended merely for the use of the care-taker who "makes the bed." The alcove may be a little larger and have a *ruelle* between the bed and the wall, wide enough for a piece of furniture, and often in old times accommodating a chair or even a *fauteuil* in which a visitor might sit. It was the place where, one after another, the guests to whom the lady would do special honour were received at the time of morning visits, the lady having first submitted to the process of the toilet, at least to the extent of having her hair most elaborately dressed.

This arrangement of the alcove has never obtained in the United States, the Americans having followed English rather than French precedent in the matter. But another tendency is at work which is curiously

THE BEDROOM

leading nearly in the same direction as the universal recognition of the alcove, and that is the banishment—not of the bed, but of the toilet apparatus generally, into a separate room well shut off from the bedroom proper. If we put bath and basin and all the “waterworks” together into a large and sufficiently lighted dressing-room, then indeed the bedroom, having nothing to suggest special privacy except the bed itself, may become a sitting-room as available as the *boudoir* of very large establishments. And, by the way, has not the *boudoir* gone out? It does seem to the writer—who confesses to less constant study of the modern house plans than of their predecessors in old times—that the *boudoir* is not as well recognised a part of the lady’s private domain as it was in England forty years ago, and in America both then and thereafter in houses of much more than common extent and splendour. But in any case the bedroom grows more and more like unto a pleasant private sitting-room as the modern refinements have sway. And as to the bed, there is no reason why the housemaids should not resort to a scheme much in fashion in Germany and even in Eastern France when those were young who are now old. The custom in the “consulate of Plancus” was to do up the bed in the morning, piling the bed-clothes neatly folded, and the big soft Feder-bett or *plumet* together in the middle, and draw a “spread” over the whole in such a way as to disguise utterly the shape and even the nature of the apparatus below. When turned up this way for the day the bed looked like anything but a place to lie upon. At supper time

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A BEDROOM IN CAMBRIDGE

the mädchen came and “made the bed”—and then you saw what was meant by the touching old ballad, in good English and still better in the original Scots, by the wail and prayer of the sick or sorrowful young man:

“Oh, mother, mother! make my bed,
And make it long and narrow.”

But indeed that way of treating the bed so that it shall not look like a bed is a device that might be followed. Far be it from this argument to insist upon the merits of the enclosed and wood-built stand-

THE BEDROOM



BEDROOM AND SITTING-ROOM

ing bed-place like a bunk in an officer's cabin at sea ; but where the bedstead and the bed (the terms being used in the more usual sense) are enclosed by a house which reaches the floor and conceals everything within itself, there is certainly an added freedom as to the use of the rooms for the purposes of life by day.

None of our examples to-day serve to remind us of any such possibilities. The twin bedsteads now and for a dozen years much in fashion appear frequently ; also the brass bedstead, which is greatly valued among sanitary scientists. There is, too, the

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THE INFLUENCE OF L'ART NOUVEAU

old-fashioned bedstead built of hard wood in slender bars, each bar turned in the length into an appearance of a string of beads, and the old-fashioned double bed as modified by very recent tendencies of *l'art nouveau*. And yet in almost all there is evidence that the room is intended for use as a sitting-room, the room where the proprietress receives her lady friends to an indefinite extent.

A large bedroom with all its accessories may be quite a model apartment. With its ample fireplace ready for immediate action; its long and low mantel-

THE BEDROOM



A BEDROOM UNDER THE EAVES

shelf with *objets d'art* ranged along it, pieces which are perhaps a shade less effective as decorations than those which the dining-room mantelpiece would demand; its toilet table and large glass, and its additional Psyche glass in which the whole skirt may be viewed even to the floor; its dainty little stand having two little drawers and yet capable of being moved about the room; its writing table, large enough, solid enough for the hasty notes to friends which the occupant may choose to indite without going to the

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

library below; the fixed seat in the deep-seated window and the abundant lighting from at least two sides, we have the make-up of a charming room for daily life.

On page 185 is shown a bedroom of a type now a bit old-fashioned. Here, with the complete set of furniture in a variety of white enamel ware, the wood itself concealed under the uniform coat of milky gloss, a method of adornment which is extended to the mantelpiece, is the prettiest room that we have yet mentioned. Alas, that it should be disfigured by the ugly monster under the fixed settle on the left—the steam radiator with its hideous lines and the consciousness that one has—that for seven months in the year that settle will be—not a pleasant seat in the window, but a screen and a disguise for the monster! The old hot-air furnace was a better thing in many ways than the more powerful modern apparatus.

There are other rooms in which no bedstead is visible, but which are yet undoubtedly bed-chambers if one may read their disposition and their old furnishings aright. In one there is the old-fashioned high bureau (not a tallboy, but a bureau so tall that it is removed from the modern class of “dressing bureaus” while yet it has a mirror hung on the wall above it), and the room is either a bedroom or a large dressing-room opening into the bedroom proper. What one likes in such rooms is the extreme simplicity of fittings and decorations. This is indeed the way to make a room pretty at the lowest possible cost, unless we are to have the hangings of the wall of a woven stuff of some kind rather than a wall

THE BEDROOM



AN OLD-FASHIONED BEDROOM

paper, in which case a slightly greater expense will have been incurred. Another room is furnished with interesting pieces of old times, a bureau and a little round table of much older type than the two chairs, but all ancestral in their look. The room itself, with its comparatively low ceiling and its very simple fitting up, may be all that can be asked for as most simple and most gracious; though in modern houses the dreadful radiator is only too apt to stand in the choice corner by the fireplace and explain why the fireplace itself is bare—without andiron and logs.

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

Page 187 is a delightful room. Its fixed and permanent "finish" is not seen, for curtains conceal what otherwise would be in view; but the open bookcase tells the story, and we learn that this also is of the simplest woodwork finished in white enamel, as indeed are the little writing table, the arm-chair drawn up to it, and so much of the door-trim as the curtain allows us to see. The chair and upholstered arm-chair covered with a striped silk material in the best taste of the eighteenth century, are grouped in the sentimental way with the low stand bearing the workbasket and the vase of roses; but let no reader suppose that the word "sentimental" is used otherwise than in the good sense of betokening sentiment. All this is of the olden-time genuine American refinement of ancestral dignity; but the writing table is crowned by a desk telephone and that feature "dates" the whole composition within a decade at least.

In all this nothing has been said of folding bedsteads. We are told, and on good authority, that they are made nowadays in strict accordance with sanitary requirements, and it is true that even in high grade New York City hotels this modern invention has been introduced, and with such success that a room already free from the apparatus of the toilet as above described, is made into a sitting room or anything else (at least in appearance) by the substitution of what seems a great bookcase or mirror-fronted wardrobe for that which is indeed the place of slumber. This, however, is not quite our subject to-day. No room need be ashamed to seem frankly

BEDROOM IN HOUSE OF REGINALD DE KOVEN, ESQ., WASHINGTON, D. C.



HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



A COLONIAL BEDROOM

what it is, and we might as well call it a bedroom when the bed is in another room as when there is no longer any visible bedstead. Therefore it is that we are more inclined to consider one or two modern plans which seem to be useful in the direction indicated above—the direction of separating the toilet apparatus from the bedroom, and thereby making the bedroom a pleasant place in which to sit and, indeed, to live.

Here is a plan (page 190) in use in some of the modern hotels, and its application to the private

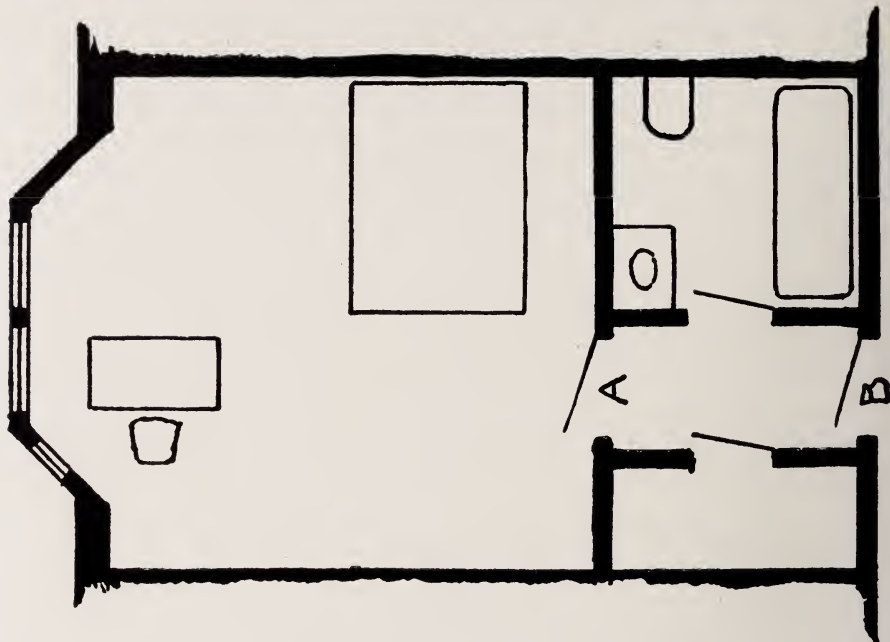
THE BEDROOM



A BEDROOM SUITE

house is obvious and easy. The door A is not absolutely essential; its chief purpose, indeed, is to give the bedroom itself a more complete and carefully closed-in appearance when it is shut. The ventilation of the room by the aid of the fanlight over the entrance door B is a little easier without the interposition of the door A. The use of such a door must always be a matter of private choice. The bathroom is large enough, of course, for its purpose, and there is a window in the wall which may or may not be left open for a large part of the day. The reader is reminded that with modern plumbing kept in good

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



PLAN FOR BEDROOM AND BATH

order the room in which the waterworks are arranged is no harder to ventilate than any other room in the house. The most troublesome of all its appliances, the waste pipes of the bath-tub and the basin, are themselves harmless under such modern conditions. The great closet opposite the bathroom should have an electric bulb inside the door and this will be sufficient to make the shelves above and hanging space below far more available and far more easy to keep clean and sweet than even in the homes of our ancestors.

Another type of room, that with which a large dressing room is associated, has the exceptional advantage that the two divisions together occupy the

THE BEDROOM

whole end of the pleasant house in Cambridge in which they are to be found. The bedstead, set with its head against the wall, has a window opposite its foot, but this window need never be open during the hours of repose, because there is a bay window admitting the air all the time, and at the proper hours the blessed light of early morning which is still kept from shining into the eyes of the sleeper. The toilet apparatus being relegated to the smaller room on the right, there is left space for the bookcase, for various tables, and most of all for a working table in the most charming of all situations, namely, in the throat of the bay window. The bedroom of which this is a reminiscence is certainly the pleasantest room in which the writer ever spent a night.

CHAPTER X

THE KITCHEN

AS a subject for discussion, it may seem, at first glance, that the kitchen of a house promises little of value or interest, at least to the male portion of the community. The conception and development of the drawing-room, hall or library doubtless appear at first sight more attractive, but let us see if even the less prominent and often neglected kitchen may not afford profitable consideration. In animal life, human or otherwise, regular and continued existence is dependent upon the proper discharge of the functions of a digestive system. No less is a home dependent for its smooth running upon a well-organised kitchen department. To this end, it must be well planned, well constructed and supplied with up-to-date furnishings. In regard to the latter more particularly, the kitchen of to-day is a great transformation and departure from the same apartment in use one or two generations ago. In good old primitive days, kitchen and living-room were often one and the same. There is certainly a good deal of romantic charm about such a room in an old English or early American home, whether one has ever actually seen it or only become familiar with it in history and fiction. There were the wainscoted walls and beamed ceiling, well

THE KITCHEN

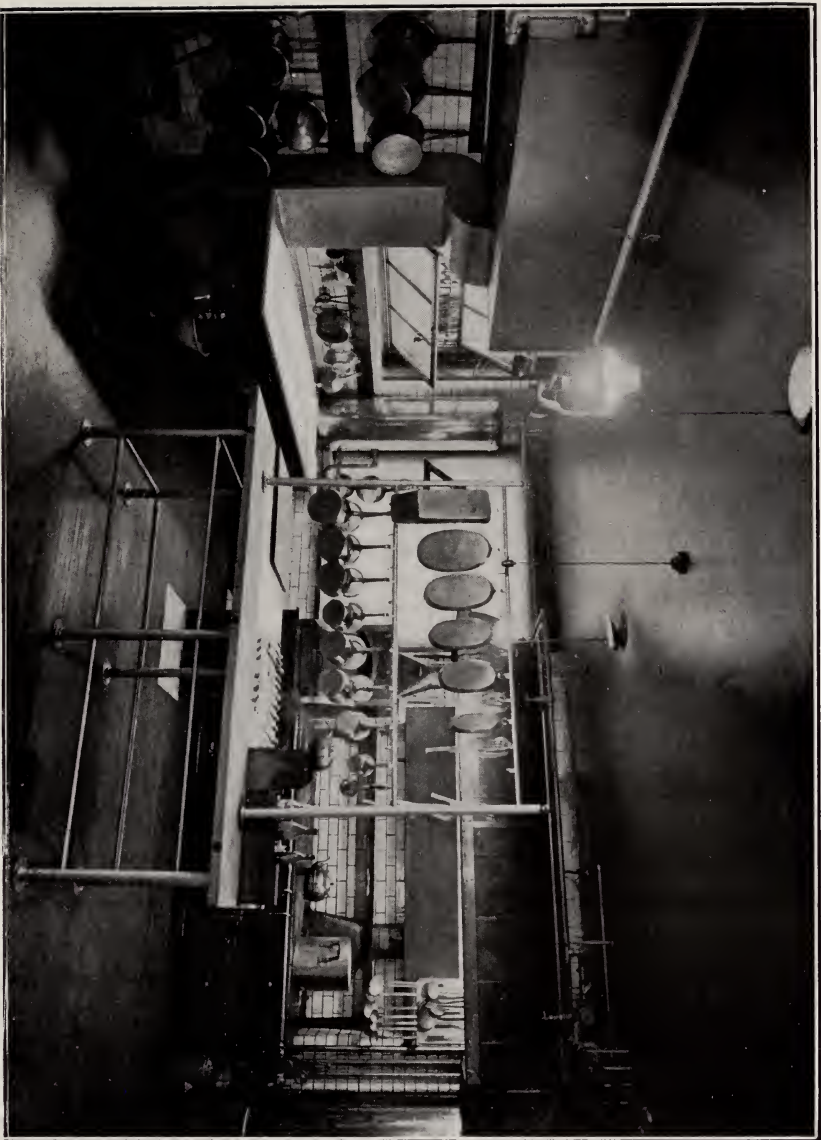
smoked and begrimed; the great brick fireplace with burning logs and steaming kettles on the swinging cranes; the floor of wide, well-worn boards; the unvarnished chairs and table of oak and the rows of burnished pans and old china on convenient racks. On the deep-set window ledge smiled potted plants and in a corner stood the spinning wheel. Connecting with it was the woodshed, which in turn opened into the barn. Everything was convenient and handy for the housewife and arranged with an idea of minimising labour. There are, doubtless, many who now own palatial homes in town and country, having every luxurious appointment, who feel a longing at times for a good square meal in the old home of bygone days. Certain it is that brain as well as brawn have been produced by just such homely living.

In planning homes for the well-to-do of to-day, homes of generous size and luxurious appointments, it is to be feared that both architects and builders are at times at fault in their arrangement of the kitchen and its subsidiary rooms. In their desire to produce a handsome scheme for the showier rooms, they have been known to ignore the claims of that part of the anatomy of the house which is below stairs or placed well out of the public gaze. It would seem that to the kitchen was given such place and space as remained after all other considerations had received attention. If not actually bad in size or shape, it is often a constant source of annoyance because no attention has been paid to utilitarian considerations. And when the lady of the house has condemned the

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

kitchen she will likely make statements not calculated to swell the breast of the architect with pride, no matter how superb his façade. With a hope of demonstrating the possibilities of the subject, let us take up some detailed considerations.

In the case of a town house, built, let us say, on a lot not a corner one, the location of the kitchen has limitations as to choice of exposure to any particular point of the compass. It is desirable that the exposure should be to the south or west or between the two. There is no denying the sanitary result of direct sunlight aside from the benefit of having the prevailing breezes for ventilation, and our kitchen must be light, sanitary and easily ventilated. In the house in question, it will generally be located under the dining-room or somewhere in that story having service from the street. It will probably be possible to get light from one side only. The windows should be ample, close up to the ceiling and as nearly in the centre of the wall space as possible. To get cross ventilation is the problem. This should be accomplished, without making use of the hall or other basement room, by arranging a small air shaft or flue on the side of room opposite the windows. This shaft or flue is not expected to carry off the smoke arising from cooking operations, which should be carried away in a vent flue opening above the range. Of course, a window opening to the outside would be preferable to the air shaft or flue, and the sill of such a window could well be kept high above the floor so as not to obstruct wall space more than necessary. Having arranged our kitchen with regard to lighting and



KITCHEN IN HOUSE OF JAMES STILLMAN, ESQ., NEW YORK

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

ventilation, its access should be considered. The conventional long hall or passage to the front area on the same level as the kitchen is not susceptible of much variation, providing the latter is at the rear of the house. In the popular American basement plan, the service entrance is arranged at one side, with the main entrance in the middle or at the other side. Differences in floor levels are provided for by steps within the house. If in any wise possible, a sunken area reached by six or more outside steps should be avoided as being dangerous in winter and unsatisfactory at all times.

The suburban house being capable of fairly ideal arrangement, there is no good excuse for an ill arrangement of the kitchen. From utilitarian considerations it should be, and generally is, placed on the same level as the dining-room and in a separate wing. In such cases the matters of cross ventilation and lighting are not difficult to arrange and the desired exposure easily is obtained.

The proper size for a kitchen is determined entirely by the actual service required of it. It should be compact without being cramped, with the idea of placing fixtures and utensils within easiest reach. Too much room is quite as undesirable as too little, and the happy medium should be carefully sought.

In regard to the fitting up of our kitchen, we should not allow anything to go into it that is not first-class and thoroughly up-to-date. For flooring, tile and artificial stone are rejected by some authorities as being unsatisfactory to work on, gradually affecting the feet. Others insist on a hardwood floor.

THE KITCHEN

Where conditions make it possible, however, an unglazed vitrified white tile is the handsomest and least absorbent material and the objection as to the effect on the feet can be overcome by using lengths of fibre matting where most wear comes. These can be removed at will and the floor scoured. Rubber tiling is also a suitable flooring material, and produces a handsome effect. It can be laid on wood or cement and is available under almost all conditions. The side walls should be finished with white glazed tile to a height of six feet or more, having a concave base moulding and neat cap piece, with such simple lines of coloured tile as good taste would suggest. The walls above the tile and the ceiling may be covered with a material in the nature of an oil-cloth, made for that purpose and in appropriate colourings and patterns. Thus the room may be given a washing over all parts and kept clean and fresh as the most fastidious could require. The architraves or casings of the doorways should have white marble base blocks.

Thus far we have been constructing our room; the appliances necessary to make it of use now invite attention. The range is easily first in importance. It should be so located as to receive strong side light on its top and at the same time not be directly in a cross draught that interferes with the fire. The so-called French range, with its black steel sides and nickel-plated trimmings, is a handsome piece of kitchen furniture. At one end, it will have a section devoted to cooking with gas. At the proper height, a projecting curved hood will collect most of the smoke arising from broiling and allow it to be drawn into

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

a vent flue in the chimney. Inasmuch as the hot-water boiler is not to be considered a handsome feature, it is well to conceal it if possible in some convenient closet or else place it on the chimney breast in a horizontal position above the range. This relieves the difficulty of keeping the floor clean under and behind it when it is set on a standard.

On the opposite side of the room from the range we may locate the sink, and between the two place the table. A space of about five feet on each side of the table will be found sufficient to allow of easy movement and at the same time make a convenient disposition. The porcelain sink and drip-board and nickled pipes make a fine effect. It is wise to keep as much as possible of the supply and drain piping exposed. It can be made far from ugly and any repairs can be made without cutting of walls and floors. The table can be arranged with convenient drawers for kitchen cutlery and other necessary small implements; also a deep metal-lined drawer for throwing refuse temporarily, to be emptied into the regular metal can or barrel every day. A lower shelf will be found handy. The top may be of wood or marble and have a narrow plate shelf down the centre about fifteen inches above it, carried on end brackets and leaving the top open under it. The gas or electric light fixture should be above the table, with a side bracket above the sink.

Very handsome refrigerators are in the market, having glass or tile linings and compartments for every conceivable use. The exteriors are of wood or tile and they are altogether a most sanitary place for



KITCHEN IN THE RESIDENCE OF THE LATE JAMES HENRY SMITH, NEW YORK

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

the keeping of food. Some housekeepers prefer a built-in box, but there is little, if any, gain in going to that expense, as the portable ones meet every requirement. In the case of the town house, the refrigerator may best be located in the hall between the street entrance and the kitchen and handy to the latter. It should, of course, be set in a well-lighted place if possible. The drainage can be taken care of by arranging a pipe to discharge above a sink in the cellar.

The kitchen closet may be devoted almost entirely to the holding of pots, kettles and other bulky utensils. The tins and agate ware should be kept bright and clean and hung on brass hooks in rows on the kitchen wall where they may have more or less decorative value appropriate to the room. Some of the dry groceries most constantly needed should be in a small and shallow wall cupboard or a narrow shelf within easy reach. A cold-storage closet should be arranged for the keeping of vegetables and dry groceries in bulk, possibly in a laundry extension, off from the kitchen.

In the plan of a town house with the kitchen below-stairs, the butler's pantry is of course located on the dining-room level. A single window is sufficient for light, as a rule. Some arrangements permit of a skylight. Provision for the table china is made in dressers, with glazed doors. These should extend to the ceiling, if necessary, making storage cupboards of the upper portion. The pantry sink is of porcelain and of open-plumbing type. To a height of two feet and eight inches, the dressers should be

THE KITCHEN

about twenty-two inches deep and be built with tiers of drawers, bread-cutting slides and a cupboard or two. The upper part of the dressers should be set about fifteen inches above the lower and be about fifteen inches deep. The cabinetmaker often produces such fine results in constructing these dresser-cases that the mistress of the house may be proud to show them. In the centre of the pantry may be placed the serving table. This will have a marble top and have a section arranged as a plate-warmer, steam-heated. The dumb-waiter will occupy a convenient corner and provide direct communication to the kitchen.

In a detached or suburban house with the kitchen on the dining-room level, the pantry will have the same furniture but be so planned as to allow no view of the kitchen from the dining-room and have two double-swinging doors between, with panels of glass. The pantry floor may be a choice of vitrified tile, marble and wood. A neat parquetry floor is appropriate. A kitchen pantry is a desirable feature, devoted to the keeping of kitchen crockery and the sugar and flour barrels. The latter are concealed in a sort of cupboard arrangement, with hinged top which gives easy access to the barrels and forms a shelf when not raised.

The laundry is a separate room, fitted with a suitable stove, a row of porcelain tubs and a closet for keeping clothes baskets, pins, lines and irons. The tubs must be well lighted. The floor may be of cement, laid off in small squares; the walls of glazed brick or painted plaster. Space must be allowed

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

for a table and one or more ironing boards. Access to the yard must be easy and a steam clothes drier may be provided for use in inclement weather.

As an adjunct to the kitchen section of the house, a servants' hall is quite indispensable. It will serve as dining-room and sitting-room and be substantially furnished. It may or may not immediately adjoin the kitchen, but should be easy of access thereto. And having thus described our kitchen and its subsidiary parts, we may complete its usefulness by connecting it with the rest of the house by telephone to each bedroom, halls, drawing-room and dining-room.

CHAPTER XI

THE HOUSE IN RELATION TO OUT-OF-DOORS

WHILE it is only of recent years that most townspeople have taken very seriously to life in the country, the well-to-do residents of Boston and its vicinity have long been used to passing a comparatively large portion of their time on their country places, and spending trouble and money in making the estates all that country estates should be. It is not a matter of accident consequently that a considerable proportion of the most elaborate formal gardens laid out by American architects have been laid out on country places situated not very far from Boston.

The garden of "Weld," illustrated in this chapter, is in Brookline, and has been peculiarly successful in reproducing under American conditions the high style, the elaborate design and peculiar fragrance of the old Italian gardens. The estate of "Weld" is situated on the top of a high hill, the plateau of which is pretty well covered by the house, the grounds immediately surrounding it and the garden. From the house and garden the land, which falls away sharply, is well wooded, and the garden consequently is provided with the shelter and background offered by fine trees.

The house is on the right, and between it and the garden is in the first place a bowling green, the

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

terminal feature of which is an exedra, while back of the exedra is a grove of trees to shut off the bowling green and the house from the garden. There are two walks on the boundary of the bowling green, and leading through the grove to the two gazebos at the upper corners of the garden. There are also two other walks leading through the grove, and coming out on the garden, about midway between the gazebos on one side and the line of the mall on the other.

The gazebos, mentioned above, are situated in the two corners of the garden nearer the house. As one enters the garden by way of the inner covered alleys through the grove one sees the garden almost on the line of the illustration on page 205. The cross view of the garden at the end near the house is figured on page 208. Down the centre of the garden is a stately mall which leads to the very beautiful old fountain, while beyond the fountain is the pergola.

One of the most interesting characteristics of the garden is the differences of level, of which there are three. The highest level is that of the terrace walks at the two sides, which is the same as the level of the gazebos. Then there is a lower terrace walk, paved in brick, of which a glimpse may be obtained in the illustration on page 207, and which is on the same level with the fountain and the pergola. Finally there is the lowest level, that of the mall and the flower beds. The layout of the garden is just about a square, but the mall down the centre line emphasises its length. The different levels, the wealth of foliage in the background, and the many attractive

HOUSE IN RELATION TO OUT-OF-DOORS



THE GARDEN OF WELD

features of the layout make the garden one of the most interesting in the country.

Such a garden is of course one on a large scale and demands a house in accordance with it. It is indeed a very unfortunate thing for American domestic architecture that the better architects, particularly in the East, so rarely design small houses and grounds.

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

The plan of a small house is frequently even more difficult to work out than that of a much larger one, and, as like as not, it is equally difficult to fit a good-looking design to the plan. It requires more, not less ingenuity, to make a modest sum of money go a long way, yet an architect is paid very much less in the case of an inexpensive house than in the case of an expensive one. The consequence is that many architects, and these the most conscientious members of their profession, cannot afford to undertake small jobs, and houses of a certain cost are placed in the hands of builders or turned over to inferior architects or draughtsmen. It is only in the West that the best local architects are still willing to undertake this comparatively unremunerative class of work, and that is only because the proportion of highly remunerative domestic work is still comparatively small in that part of the country. It seems inevitable that the man who wants to build a good but inexpensive house will have to pay comparatively more for his plans than the man who builds a good but more expensive house.

A comparatively inexpensive house design by a good architect consequently affords an extremely welcome object lesson, and the residence at Hadlyme, Conn., is such a discovery. Like Weld, it consists of an adaptation of an Italian villa's grounds to a New England landscape.

In the house the large Long Island shingles have been used. They afford a more interesting surface and contribute a more natural and idiomatic appearance, make it look as appropriate amid its



PERGOLA AT WELD



RAISED SEAT IN THE GARDEN OF WELD

HOUSE IN RELATION TO OUT-OF-DOORS

somewhat rough surroundings as a good New England farmhouse would look, and at the same time give it the distinction imparted by a very much higher tradition of style.

Very simple means have been used to obtain this most charming effect. The site affords a prospect across and along a river which is one of the most beautiful views of the kind in this country, and the house is situated and planned so that its porches and living rooms overlook this river view. The edge of the plateau on which the house is located is outlined by a low stone wall, which is separated from the building by a flat bare lawn, so that there is nothing to interfere with the enjoyment of the natural beauties of the site. The garden has been placed on one side, its axis coinciding with the central line of the two porches and the colonnade which connects them, and it is assuredly one of the most charming small gardens in this country. Its scale harmonises with that of the house and its character with that of its surroundings. In general appearance it is just a little rough, as it should be, considering the roughness of some of the immediately adjoining land, but its roughness has not the remotest suggestion either of being affected or slovenly. It is merely an additional illustration of the happy completeness with which the design of the house and the garden has been wrought into the site. A better example could not be desired of a "formal" plan which depends upon the use of simple means and which reaches a novel, picturesque and idiomatic effect.

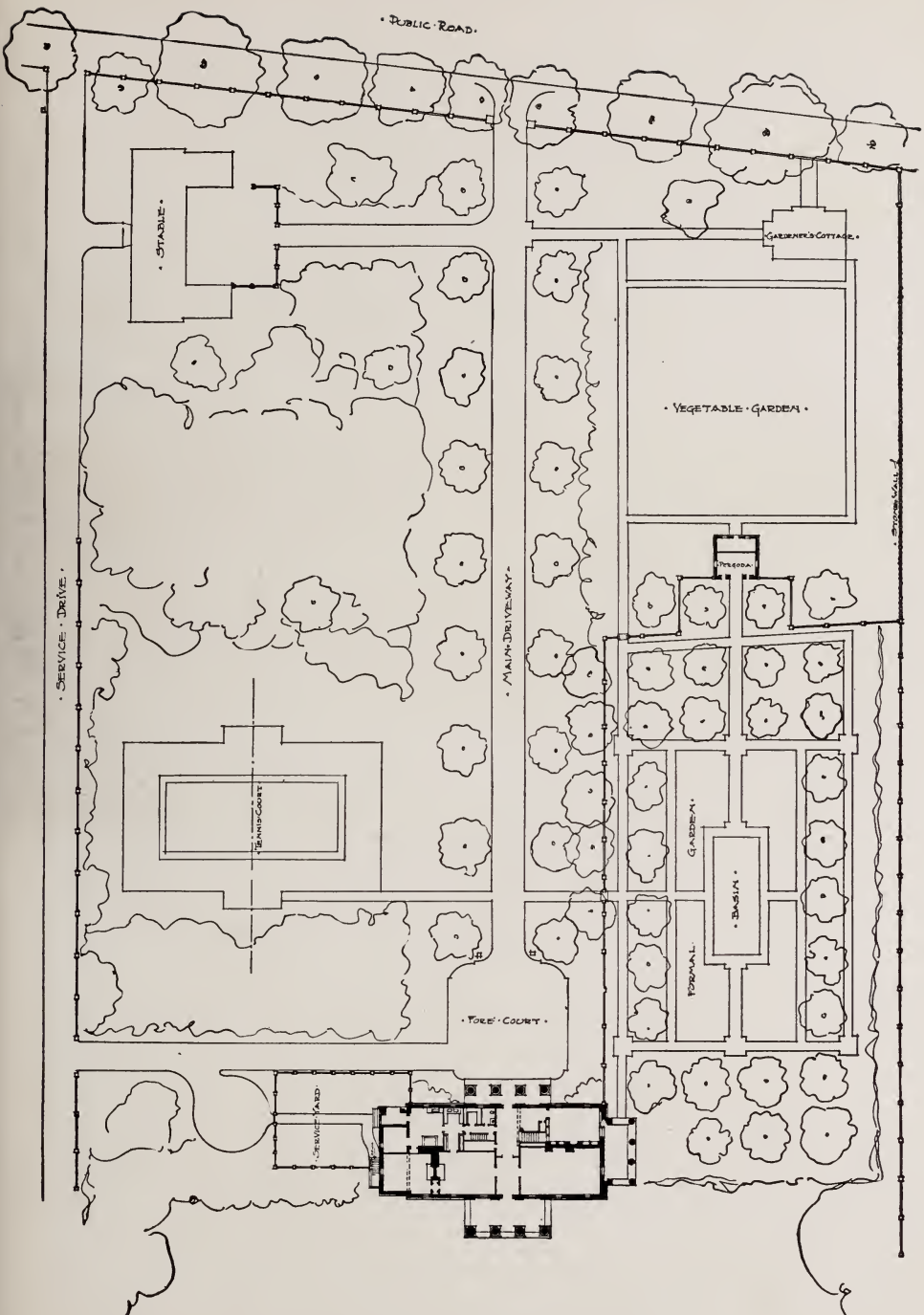
On a scale between this and Weld are a house and

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY



HOUSE OF FREDERICK CULVER, ESQ., HADLYME, CONN.

garden at Warren, Rhode Island. The plot of land on which the house is situated is neither very large nor very small. It neither rises to the dignity of a country estate nor sinks to the comparative insignificance of a suburban villa site. It comprises some ten acres of land, so near to a large city that the trolley cars skirt its boundaries, but so far away that the immediate neighbourhood is not thickly settled. Its owner consequently has as much room as he needs



LAY-OUT OF A HOUSE AND GARDEN

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

in which to satisfy all the interests of country life except those connected with a large farm. When a well-to-do family occupies a place of this size, they generally do it with the fullest intention of enjoying as varied and abundant a country life as a few acres of land will permit, but unfortunately they rarely believe that an architect can be of any assistance to them, except in the design of the house. They usually consider themselves fully competent to lay out the roads, select the situation of the house, the stable, and the tennis court, and plant the flower garden. The architect's advice may be asked about certain details, but it is a very rare occurrence to find a place of this kind which has been placed in the hands of an architect from start to finish, and designed as a whole. Some of the larger estates have been so planned and designed, but the function of the architect in relation to the smaller estates usually ceases when he has supervised the erection of the buildings.

It is obvious, however, that an estate of several acres, no less than an estate of several hundred acres, should be developed under the eye of the architect, and it is of the utmost importance that the class of Americans who buy an estate of this size and build upon it should be brought to realise that the architectural treatment of the grounds is inseparably connected with the architectural effect of the house. When they fail to take competent advice as to the proper layout and planting of their grounds, they are sinning against their own opportunities just as flagrantly as if they erected a vulgar and tawdry house. Every one of these smaller estates will pos-

HOUSE IN RELATION TO OUT-OF-DOORS

sess certain advantages as to location, view, exposure, the character and situation of the trees, and the like, which call for a certain particular way of approach, certain particular means of emphasising the good points and of evading or concealing the bad. And when such an estate starts with a complete and appropriate layout, its owner will be fully repaid for his larger expenditure by the economy with which his place can be subsequently developed. An ill-planned estate means a continual process of tearing down and reconstructing, whereas one that is well planned will become larger and older without mutilation and waste. Age and growth will only mean the confirmation of the original excellence of the design.

The estate in Warren consists of a long and narrow strip of land running from an important road to the Sound. This land is level, rather than undulating, but as it approaches the water it slopes gently down to the sea. The most attractive view was that looking towards the Sound, and the house had to be placed and planned so that its inhabitants could enjoy the outlook in that direction. The important natural beauty of the site was an apple orchard, not far from the road, and immediately adjoining one boundary of the property. The area of the estate was large enough to afford abundant space for stables, gardens and out-buildings, but not so large that it could afford to be indifferent to its neighbours. Situated as it was on a thoroughfare, with trolley cars passing to and fro, and bordered by places similar in size and character, it had to be

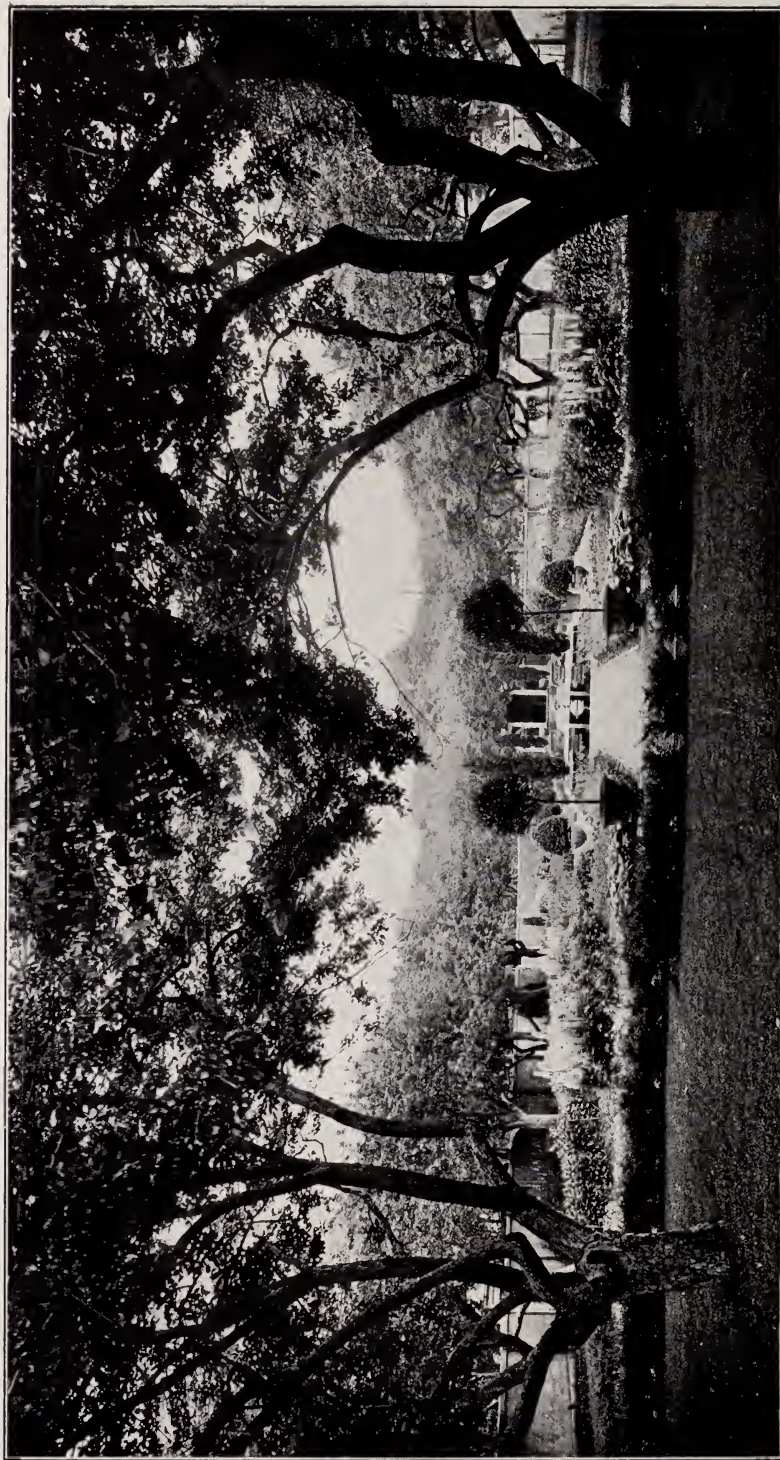
HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

planned in a somewhat exclusive manner, so that its beauties could not be impaired or spoiled by surroundings which could not be controlled.

Wherever necessary, the land has been separated from the road or from adjoining property by a concrete wall. The precise location of the house was determined partly by the desire to incorporate the apple trees in the garden, and partly by the necessity of seeing the water and the islands beyond from a proper distance. The long dimension of the house was naturally made parallel to the road, so that its front porch would face the approach, and its back porch command the water view. A straight driveway bordered with trees and shrubbery leads from the road to the forecourt in front of the house, and these trees enclose a vista which is terminated by the colonnade and the entablature of the front porch. On the right of the driveway, near the road, but surrounded by trees, is the stable, while further along on the same side is the tennis court. The narrower space to the left of the driveway is occupied first by the vegetable garden and then by the flower garden, but the flower garden is divided both from the driveway and the vegetable garden by high walls, so that one sees nothing from the driveway but the wall and the trees. The garden can be reached by a gate in the wall; but this gate is merely a matter of convenience. Architecturally the garden is supposed to be approached from the porch on the left side of the house. The garden itself does not, indeed, extend all the way to this porch; but one can step from the porch onto the grass, and from

HOUSE AND GARDEN OF THE REV. MR. HUTCHESON, WARREN, R. I.





THE REV. MR. HUTCHESON'S GARDEN, FROM THE HOUSE

HOUSE IN RELATION TO OUT-OF-DOORS

there a few steps will take one to the garden. The garden, which is enclosed on every other side, is, of course, left open in the direction of the water. A simpler and more serviceable plan could not be imagined, yet it takes advantage of every natural advantage of the site, and carefully shuts off every aspect of the land which is either less beautiful or of dubious value. As one examines the layout, it seems so inevitable that one can hardly imagine any other arrangement of the site, yet simple, compact and inevitable as it appears, it might in less skilful hands have gone wrong at a hundred different points. A slight change in the location of the house and the flower garden, in the method of approach, or in the plan of the house in relation to the plan of the grounds would have thrown out the whole scheme, which now fills the allotted space very much as a well-composed sculptured relief fills without overcrowding a selected surface.

There is a prevalent impression among a number of architectural amateurs that the charm of a country place depends upon a certain inconsequence in its general disposition. They seem to think that when every character and detail of a house and garden is carefully subordinated to its service in a comprehensive scheme, the result must necessarily be frigid and uninteresting. It would be well for such people to consider how such a house and garden as that of Mr. Hutcheson fits in with this general theory. Here is a place which has been planned throughout without scrupulous attention to detail, and yet it is most assuredly one of the most charm-

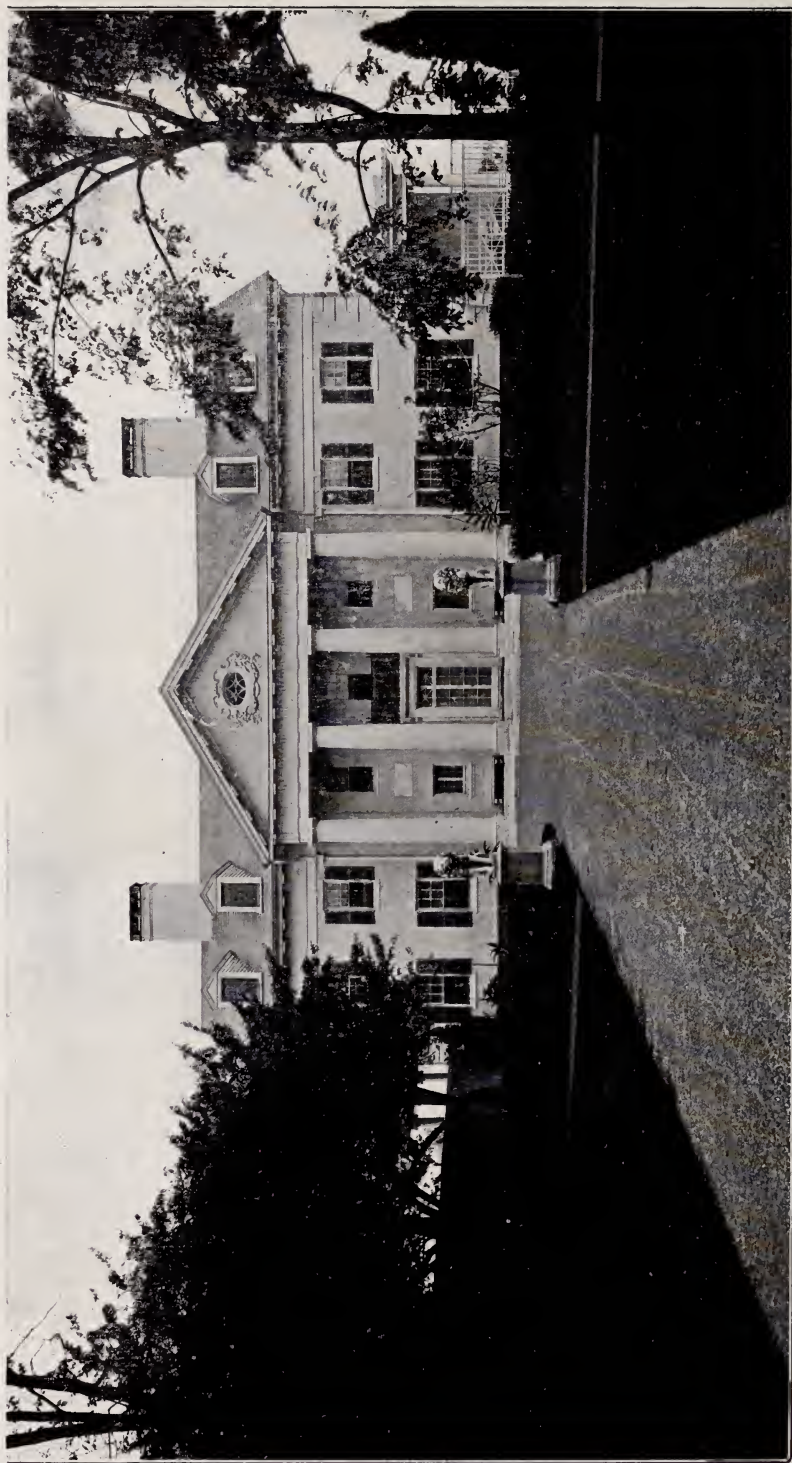
HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

ing places in this country. Moreover, its charm does not depend, as does that of so many English houses, upon the mellowing and softening effect of time, for the garden had been planted only one summer when the accompanying photographs were taken. It depends absolutely upon the propriety of the whole scheme. Of course, this was not something which any architect could have reached by the application of certain principles or rules. The appropriate scheme was the issue of the architect's ability to "see" the house and garden best adapted to the site, and the greater or smaller charm of a country place will finally depend upon the greater or smaller propriety of this initial conception. A country house can undoubtedly be charming even though inconsequential in many respects; but the highest charm can attach only to a place whose beauty does not reside merely in more or less important details. The highest charm is a matter of beauty and style, as well as of atmosphere.

It is not necessary to describe this house and garden in detail. The illustrations will tell the reader more at one glance than elaborate descriptions. Yet I should like to call attention to the admirable simplicity of the design of the house, both inside and out. Architectural ornament has been used with the utmost economy, and the effect is obtained entirely by giving just the proper emphasis to the salient parts of the façade. The order and its pediment, for instance, has a bold projection on the front and a still bolder one in the rear, but in neither case is it overbold. It is always a difficult thing to



A COLONIAL ENTRANCE



HOUSE OF THE REV. MR. HUTCHESON, WARREN, R. I.

HOUSE IN RELATION TO OUT-OF-DOORS

make a feature of this kind count just as it should in relation to the house, because it takes only a small error in scale to throw out one of these big porticoes; and when they are either too weak or too strong, instead of pulling the whole design together, they break it to pieces. In the present instance, the porticoes are a source of integrity and strength, and by the very bigness of their scale they have enabled the architect to economise in the use of smaller details. The whole effect shows a combination of refinement and strength very rare in American domestic architecture.

CHAPTER XII

NEW USES OF OLD FORMS

AMERICAN use of European architectural and decorative forms has passed through a number of phases. There was a time toward the middle of the century when our imitation of the historic styles of European domestic architecture aspired to be faithful, but was too ignorant to succeed. The architect of 1850 or thereabouts, particularly in the vicinity of New York, designed in any style his client pleased, and was as willing to supply a Florentine villa as to furnish a Gothic cottage, or a Swiss chalet. He believed, in the depths of his innocence and ignorance, that the houses with which he spotted the landscape were the "real thing," and were made authentic by the high sources from which they derived; but as a matter of fact his whimsical copies, in which a frequent ponderousness of construction was combined with restless frivolity of effect, generally bore the same relation to their models as a child's drawings do to the contour of the human face. During this period the only way in which a desire for originality expressed itself, was in the occasional combination of several different "styles" in one miscellaneous and eccentric mass. During the next important period of residential construction, the early years of the eighties, the imitative tendency which still domi-



DRAWING-ROOM AND HOUSE OF CHARLES DANA GIBSON, ESQ., NEW YORK

NEW USES OF OLD FORMS

nated the design of brick and stone, if not of frame houses, was expressed generally in well-informed reproductions of European styles; and these copies, while they had the merit of being scholarly, and of familiarising the American public with authentic historic forms, were designed with a view to stylistic fidelity rather than to the complex and varying requirements of local propriety. This phase, although it was an advance upon its predecessors, proved to be quite as evanescent. American architecture could not be satisfied with the well-informed copy any more than with the ignorant one; and at the present time, although both the careless and the careful copyist are still in evidence, the best of the younger American architects are seeking, in domestic as well as in business buildings, to reach a higher degree of personal expression and local propriety.

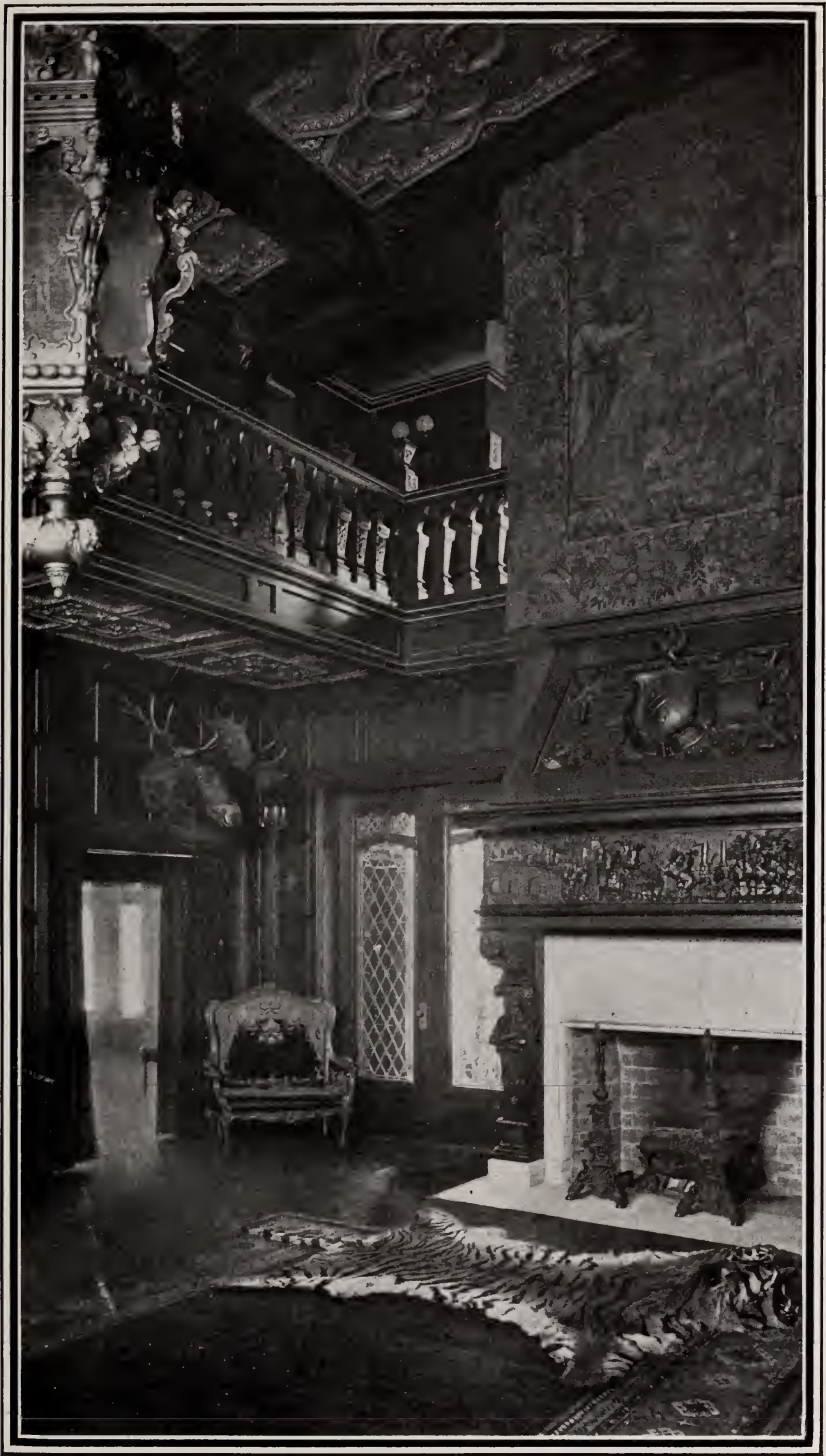
It is in the light of this demand both for personal expression and local propriety that two houses, illustrated in this chapter, can best be understood. They represent both in training and in point of view the best equipment of contemporary American architecture, combining individual expression with technical precision.

It is important that an architect who seeks individual expression should seek it in the right way, because there are in all the fine arts a good many wrong ways of going about the search. One of the worst of these is the attempt to secure originality by conscious effort. Originality, like happiness, is well enough, provided it accrues from the inevitable, but, so far as the intention goes, the accidental fruit

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

of a man's work; yet the pursuit of originality is fatal, because it seduces the architect or the artist to make his work primarily different from that of other people. This is, of course, the fallacy and the difficulty which cheapens and sterilises so much of the "New Art." The only originality worth having is that which issues unconsciously from the frank and well-informed treatment of an artist's special task or material. In the case of an architect this desirable originality must derive from his ability to adapt his design to the conditions which it is required to meet; and in any particular case this group of conditions includes many different members, some of which are frequently ignored. The design of any particular dwelling, for instance, should be adapted to the personality of its owner and his manner of life; to the site on which the dwelling stands, the character of the neighbouring country, and the scale of the surrounding foliage; and finally to what may be called the technical logic of the design itself—meaning thereby the satisfactory composition of the strictly architectural elements of the design simply as a matter of form. A house which really meets all these requirements is certain to be an original individual piece of work, just because it completely satisfies a special set of conditions. Originality is imposed upon an architect who thoroughly masters a particular job.

Such originality is independent of the sources from which the designer derives his favourite architectural forms. The notion that he can create these forms out of his head or by means of the direct in-



HALLWAY IN THE KIP HOUSE, ORANGE, N. J.



HALLWAY AT MAXWELL COURT

NEW USES OF OLD FORMS

spiration of Heaven must, of course, be at once dismissed. In all the arts there exists a great and living tradition—a high and authoritative convention derived from the best foregoing practice, and an architect even more than a painter cannot hope to do mature and finished work unless his mind has been steeped in the traditions of his art. This study of architectural history too often furnishes the architect merely with a set of forms, instead of with a sense of form and a set of principles; but a man who has any power of individual architectural thinking will be equal to the task of giving the forms with which his mind is furnished, that special rendering which the conditions of a particular design demand. The forms which he prefers will depend partly upon his personal taste and partly upon the scale and the cost of the house he is designing; and he will be at liberty to mix styles as much as he pleases provided he preserves the integrity of his composition and does not violate the logic of any particular style.

The two houses here described are intended fully to satisfy the demands of particular owners, who wanted to build upon certain sites; and to meet these different demands forms were taken from any source which suited the architect's taste or convenience, and given an individual and local rendering. The two houses are alike in certain respects, because the two owners wanted to put up the same kind of appearance, and because the designer's disposition and training made him prefer particular architectural forms. On the other hand they also differ radically because of certain obvious variations in scale,

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

cost, and situation. The similarities and differences are all significant, and are worth particular attention.

Both of these houses show plainly the result of French training, yet both are as far as possible from being merely Beaux-Arts products. The architect has combined suggestions and forms taken both from Italian and French sources. The stucco house with a red tile roof is of course derived from the Italian Renaissance villa. The detail on the other hand is very largely French. The general effect is neither one nor the other, but is probably more French than Italian. But whether French or Italian, the effect is eminently handsome and striking, and there is even something about it which can fairly be called American. I am aware that many architectural commentators will be unable to discern anything American in houses which preserve so much of the traditions of European domestic architecture; but such houses as these indubitably possess in a certain degree the quality of local propriety. An American house does not necessarily mean a house which is not European; it means primarily a house adapted to the needs and tastes of its American owner. The architect is first of all under obligations to please his clients, and if he designs a house which lacks the propriety of being adapted to its owner, it will be wanting in its chief reason for existence—in the most fundamental propriety it can possibly possess.

The means taken to adapt a house to the tastes of its owner will differ considerably in the cases of different individuals; and they also depend a good



STAIRCASE IN HOUSE OF W. L. STOW, ESQ., ROSLYN, L. I.



RESIDENCE OF DR. JACOBS, NEWPORT, R. I.

NEW USES OF OLD FORMS

deal upon the part of the country in which the individuals live. The demands of the rich western business man differ considerably from those of his eastern prototype. But there can be no doubt that the house of a rich man of the East would as a rule be wholly inappropriate unless it attained, as these two houses do, an eminently striking and handsome effect. Such Americans want to live in buildings which express frankly and fully the national youthful self-assurance, abounding prosperity, and pleasure in the brave appearances of things. It is the endeavour to satisfy this demand on the part of their clients which has led the architects of expensive houses to make these houses first of all somewhat spectacular in appearance; and in many cases the attempt to be brave and spectacular has degenerated into mere flamboyancy. In the present case such danger has been avoided. Our two houses are, as they are intended to be, smart and gay; but they are also careful and in some respects sober pieces of architectural design. They show the result of the most conscientious study in the scale and the composition of the masses, in the proportion of the different members, and in the adaptation of the house to its site. Ornament is sparingly and appropriately used. It is, perhaps, in this respect more than in any other that they show an independence of the familiar Beaux-Arts convention which disregards simplicity and sobriety of decoration. The ornament is never superfluous. It is always subordinated to the effect sought by adapting the house to its location and by the proper disposition of its masses and openings.

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

In the cases of these two houses the characters of the two locations happened to be fundamentally different. One is a dwelling at Roslyn, Long Island, situated on the crest of a high hill overlooking a considerable stretch of country. The other is in Newport, on a comparatively small plot, located in semi-urban surroundings. Consequently in the former case the problem was to design a house and its approaches which would cap the hill and command the view, while in the latter case the object of the layout was to shut out the surroundings and make the enclosed grounds, which amounted only to three and two-thirds acres, look complete within these narrow limits and so far as possible spacious.

The Roslyn estate consists, as I have said, of a high hill, on the top of which the house was to be situated. The acreage of the hill is very considerable, but its summit is comparatively small. Careful adjustments had to be made in order to arrange for the placing of so large a house on the area provided by the crown of the hill. The great desideratum was to obtain sufficient space on the south front of the house, from which the view was to be seen, and the location of the building was consequently pushed as far north as possible. The consequence is that the fore-court on the north side, to which the main driveway leads, and on which the main entrance opens, looks small compared with the scale of the house; but as long as some sacrifice was necessary it was better to sacrifice the fore-court than the terrace. In this way, and by means of a good deal of grading, plenty of space has been obtained on the



TERRACES AND HOUSE OF DR. JACOBS, NEWPORT



GARDEN OF DR. JACOBS, NEWPORT

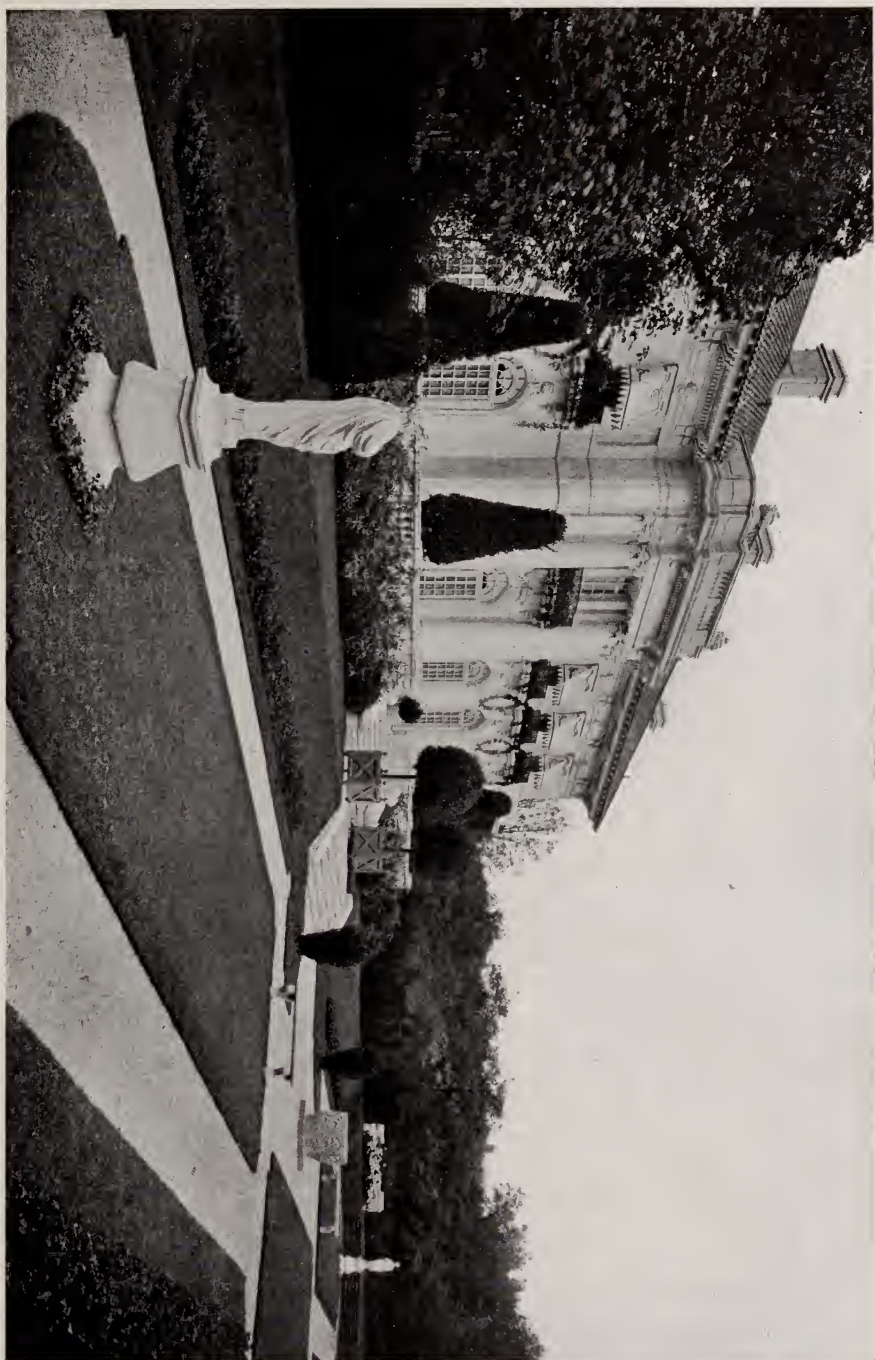
NEW USES OF OLD FORMS

south side, where it was most necessary. The object of the whole layout was to make room for a broad terrace, from which the very beautiful and extensive view was to be enjoyed, and by virtue of which the house would really fit the hill and crown its summit. This terrace outlines with a low parapet the level of the hill-top, and overruns by a good many feet the ends of the house. At each end a broad flight of steps leads down to the level of the garden, which is considerably lower than that of the house; and which is enclosed on three sides by the walls of the terrace and of the steps. On the fourth or south side, it is, of course, entirely open; but the formal treatment is continued by another and still more spacious terrace on a slightly lower level. This second terrace is kept entirely green and is bounded by a walk leading around its outer line and by a hedge. The whole arrangement makes excellent use of the space at hand and is admirably scaled. The effect as it is shown in the accompanying illustrations is not all that it should be, because the rigid lines of the garden architecture are unrelieved by any sufficient planting. The proper disposition of masses of shrubbery would serve to soften and relieve the architecture, so that its white surfaces and straight lines would count very differently in one's total impression of the place. As this is what was manifestly intended, the work must be judged in the light of such a modification. The treatment is, of course, fundamentally architectural, as it should be—particularly in relation to the location of the house; but the proper planting, after

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

it had attained its growth, would have subdued this architectural effect more to the tone of its natural surroundings.

The design of the house is as interesting as that of the layout. The building consists of a central member with wings projecting on both sides of both ends. The central division is distinguished by heavy engaged columns running through two stories, a plain frieze above, which continues around the whole building, and a parapet. On the south side the engaged columns dominate the length of the façade between the wings; on the north side they frame the entrance doorway and the window of the main hall. The wings are more simply treated, and an excellent effect is obtained by the plain surfaces of the walls, in their relation to the deep reveals of the openings. These reveals are unusually deep on the whole building; but they are particularly deep in the windows of the wings. They help, together with the strong, simple lines of the structure and the sobriety of the ornament, to give it a solid, dignified appearance. Its dignity and effect would, I think, have been enhanced by the substitution of stone for stucco, but the colour of the plaster has more grey in it than usual, and is in itself both pleasing and appropriate. It should be noticed, also, that the plan of the house enables its occupants to obtain full advantage of the layout. The living-room and the dining-room both open upon the paved recess between wings on the south side of the house, thus getting full benefit of the exposure and the outlook. Its dimensions and proportions are those of a moder-



VIEW OF DR. JACOBS' HOUSE FROM THE GARDEN, NEWPORT

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

ate-sized apartment—quite in scale with the life and the occupations of a modern American family.

The place at Newport is less of an estate than that in Roslyn, and more of a country villa, but even in this instance there was more ground in the immediate vicinity of the building to lay out than is usually the case with Newport residences, though it did not command any view. It had to be treated exclusively in relation to the house, and with the object in mind of creating a group of self-contained domestic architectural and landscape effects. In composing these effects there were two advantages. The size of the house was not such as entirely to throw it out of scale with the dimensions of the grounds; and the grounds themselves were partly enclosed by a fine growth of trees. The enclosure was, however, by no means complete; and particularly on the south side a good deal of planting was necessary for the purpose of shutting in the garden and shutting out the neighbourhood. Here again the approach is from the north. The road leads straight up to the house, and runs equi-distant between two big spreading oaks which screen the two wings of the house and disclose only the entrance. The entrance is situated in the angle of the wings, and is emphasised by pilasters running up through two stories, and by a parapet which breaks the line of the roof.

The dining-room and living-room are situated on the south side of the house, and are planned so as to be used in connection with the gardens for summer entertainment. The French windows give upon a

ENTRANCE TO HOUSE OF DR. JACOBS, NEWPORT





DRAWING-ROOM IN HOUSE OF DR. JACOBS, NEWPORT

NEW USES OF OLD FORMS

small terrace, outlined by a parapet. A few steps lead down from this terrace to another terrace on a slightly lower level; and from there another short flight of steps leads to the garden. The garden is very simply treated with comparatively few architectural features. At the end opposite to the house there is a pergola, at the back and on the sides of which deep masses of cedars have been planted. The effect of this terminal feature, of which the scale is perhaps somewhat small, is extremely charming. The treatment of the garden is very open without much planting; all is rather inconspicuous, the purpose of the arrangement doubtless being to make the available space go as far as possible, but the minor features entailed by this arrangement look somewhat episodic and the garden furniture has not in all cases been very happily placed. The green lawn also has the appearance of being cut up too much with white paths. These, however, are minor blemishes. The place is on the whole a very skilful example of a stucco villa, which in its gaiety and smartness has not lost the more sober architectural merits.

In spite of certain resemblances to other handsome American houses, these two buildings belong in one sense thoroughly to their architect, just as they belong in another sense thoroughly to their owners. Their style differs not only from any specific historic precedent, but from any similar American houses; and this individual stamp has been obtained, not in any arbitrary way, but by the candid and thorough treatment of two special problems of

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

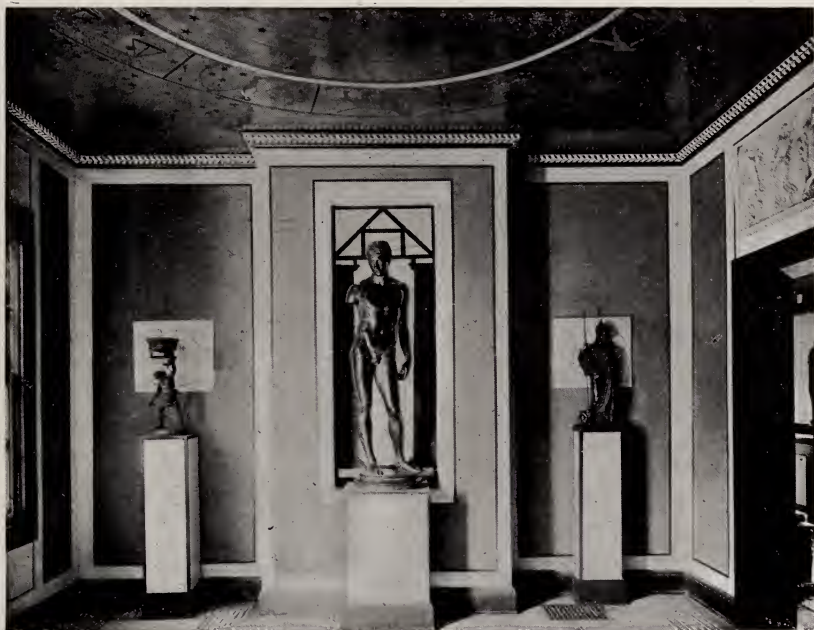


AN ITALIAN HALLWAY

design, as should be the case in adaptations of old forms to new uses.

A chapter on old forms would be incomplete without some remarks on that style of architecture commonly known as Colonial. That the arts and sciences follow civilisation was never more conclusively illustrated than in our own country. The hardy pilgrims who settled our rugged shores brought with them recollections of the architecture in vogue at that time in their old countries. These recollections found their fullest expression in "Colonial" architecture, examples of which may be seen to-day all along the coast from Maine to

NEW USES OF OLD FORMS



A ROMAN EFFECT

Georgia and Florida. As civilisation advanced westward, places of abode for the settlers had to follow, but compared with even the rudest of the coast houses, they were positively primitive. Even after conditions had become sufficiently stable for the establishment of permanent homes, and people had acquired money to build them, the result in most cases was by no means happy. The architecture of these first Western houses was influenced very often by other foreign tendencies less admirable than those of the Renaissance. In many cases architectural tradition had become so weak that the result was positively ludicrous.

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

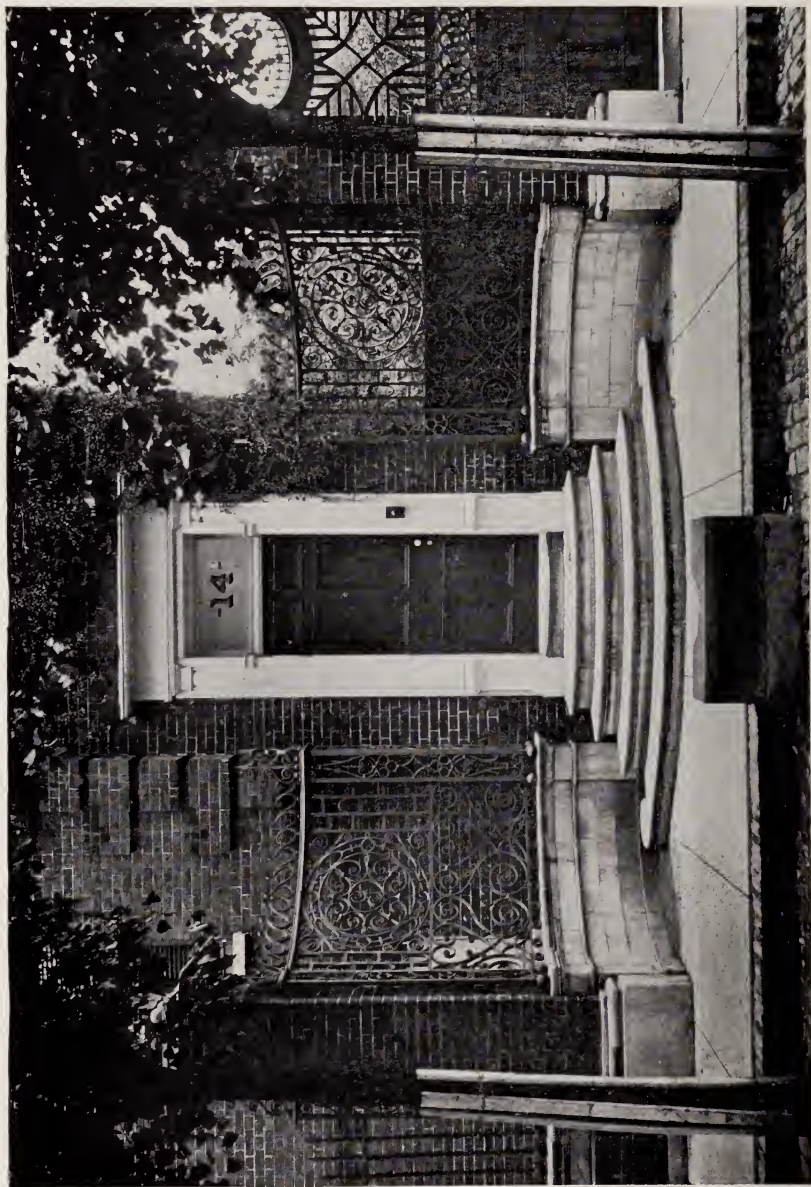
But we have now arrived at a period in which artistic education is fast becoming more general throughout the United States than even the most sanguine had hoped for half a century ago. The American architect is continually encountering new problems and solving them in his own way. He has even struck out on new lines. The country house, for instance, is a strictly American product, and it is in this kind of work that the American architect shows at his best.

Colonial architecture has got to be almost as well known and as effectively and correctly rendered in the West as anywhere in the Atlantic States. So accurate is the architect's knowledge on the subject nowadays that one might look at any one of dozens of houses and imagine it were in New England. There is nothing in either composition or detail to undeceive one for a moment. There is something frank, something naive and ingenuous about Colonial houses that an Englishman would perhaps sum up in one word—homely. The exteriors are inviting but not pretentious, decorative but not ornate. On the interiors they are frank, giving what their exteriors promise—cosiness, delicacy and refinement of detail.

The expression that an architect gives a house is to a certain extent an expression of his relation with the client. If the latter be particularly amenable and amiable in his intercourse with the architect, there can be little doubt that the work the architect does for him will be performed with a keen pleasure, which cannot help making itself visible in the aspect of the



DRAWING-ROOM WITH TAPESTRIES



A DOORWAY IN PHILADELPHIA

HOUSES FOR TOWN OR COUNTRY

finished product. If, on the other hand, the client is a difficult person to deal with pleasantly, the architect will approach his task with a necessarily diminished interest. Then, again, the designer's state of mind and all the petty troubles of the day's work show their influences in the architectural composition as they would in a painting or a piece of sculpture.

Little do we think when we behold one of the world's masterpieces, what must have been the complex causes for the ideas that prompted the master to express himself as he did and how his work would perhaps have taken on a different form amid other surroundings at another time. But it is the *idea* in a work of art that is striven after, and it is that which the interested spectator should try to follow in his study if he would be rewarded for his labour. It is in this spirit that the American architect appears more and more to be studying old forms, adapting them to new uses, and transplanting them to the remotest parts of the United States.

THE END

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By Oliver Coleman

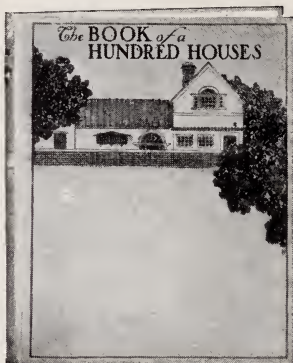
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